

CORE Discipleship is a faith-based, Christian organization. Our mission is to help you make disciples of Jesus. We provide a simple and reproducible discipleship process based on Jesus' "inner circle" or "core" comprised of Peter, James, and John. We also provide discipleship training and free discipleship resources as free downloadable eBooks.

Just like you, Father God is using the many events and circumstances of life's journey to mold and shape me into the person He desires. Occasionally, I've cooperated completely. It's in those rare moments when something extraordinary takes place - Heaven touches earth, mountains are moved, a part of me is transformed.

Through His infinite patience and unfathomable love I am learning to become the man He created me to be. As I daily surrender my life to Him through His precious Holy Spirit, I see more clearly life eternal.

My hope and prayer for you are that you too will discover God's purpose and become exactly what He has planned for you all along - His son or daughter.

May God grant that we become His disciples by His grace,

# Doug Morrell

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Doug is a seasoned discipler and small group leader. Since graduating from Texas Tech University in 1984, he's worked in a dual capacity -- working within for-profit businesses around the country while also serving the church in various pastoral roles. Additionally, he and his wife Suzie are the founders/directors of CORE Discipleship, a ministry dedicated to making disciples who make disciples. Doug and Suzie have three children: Katheryn, Hannah, and Nathaniel.

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## Introduction

The journey you are on is the greatest known to man - the discovery of who you are in light of who God is.

At the outset, I want to make this perfectly clear: this study will have absolutely no impact in your life unless you are willing to receive it and act on it. As equally important, this study was designed to be administered under the supervision and direction of a seasoned, mature Christian. As you will learn, the journey of faith is to be lived out alongside another more spiritually mature believer.

Foundations of Faith provides a step-by-step process of instruction designed to provide a basic overview of the essentials of our faith as presented in Hebrews 6:1-3.

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In this basic, foundational study, we will not address what some consider to be the most difficult part of the entire book. Hebrews 6:4-6 has been debated for years and Satan has used that debate to further his agenda. It has to do with Calvinism, Arminianism, and many stages in between. In short, John Calvin taught that you could not lose your salvation - that believers were "signed, sealed, and secure" in Jesus no matter what they did. James Arminius on the other hand taught that a born-again Christian could choose to walk away from Christ, thus forfeiting his/her salvation. We simply agree with the writer of Hebrews: "Though we speak thus, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things that belong to salvation. For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:9-12 RSV).

Age alone does not produce maturity. It is amazing how many of us think it does. We love this thought of inevitable growth. How often we say, "Just give us time. We have only been Christians for 20 or 30 years. Perhaps we will yet grow out of our anger, envy, jealousy, and divisive spirits." But time never brings maturity.

Immaturity can be identified by two clear marks: 1) an inability to instruct others; and 2) an inability to discern good from evil.

How do believers mature? 1) Begin with truth you already know but have not been obeying. Does God want you to stop some activity you know to be wrong? Does Scripture exhort you to change your attitude, forgive someone, reach out with help to another? No further light will be given until you begin to obey the truth you already have; 2) Review the promises of God for help to obey His word through the power of His Holy Spirit (for example Heb. 2:18; 4:14-16; 2 Tim. 2:7); 3) Claim those promises for yourself, do whatever you need to do, and count on God's grace to see you through the consequences; 4) Follow these steps whenever you become aware of areas of your life and thinking that are not in agreement with God's Word. This is the constant use which enables maturity and as a result, the supernatural ability to handle the solid food of the teaching about righteousness. Paul, in Ephesians 4:14, says, "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."

Since understanding and practicing God's truth leads believers to such maturity, it is obvious that it is one of the most important truths of Scripture and also one which every disciple should seek diligently to grasp and practice.

We thank our Father for telling us the truth even though it may hurt, for we know that it is always to that end that we may be healed. We pray that God may grant this Holy Spirit-born reality to each life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### Application:

Foundations of Faith is an important study for new believers and those wanting a refresher course on biblical foundations. It provides a course overview of the basic doctrines of Jesus (Hebrews 6:1-3).

Here is a two-step process of how you can integrate this material into your current processes:

#### One:

Just after a person has received Christ Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, they should receive a personal contact from a mature believer. This provides the new believer with these key elements:

• To let the new believer know that he or she has a Christian friend who cares.

• To answer questions he or she may have.

- To pray with him or her regarding any personal needs.
  To enroll him or her in a foundations class as described in Step Two.

#### Two:

Continued teaching after conversion was the pattern set by Jesus and followed by the early church. There are two ways this can be done:

1. Form a class for all new believers. This should be taught by a mature Christian and should be offered continuously in the church.

The advantage of this method is that new believers are taught in a group setting with other new Christians. They become acquainted with people on their own spiritual level with similar needs and questions, they begin to understand the value of gathering together in a smaller group setting, they learn firsthand the importance and necessity of studying God's Word, fellowship, communion, and prayer (Acts 2:42), and this initial experience sets the stage for more intimate discipleship.

Or...

2. A mature believer is prayerfully assigned to each new believer (no more than 4 new believers with any seasoned Christian at any one time). This is the heart of discipleship and the preferred manner which this material is based. Men should train men only and women should train women only (for more information regarding discipleship of this regard, please visit CoreDiscipleship.com).

Notes:	

This study has been given to:	
Address:	
City/State/Zip:	
Phone:	
Email:	
My personal covenant: Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord, Master and Savior, believing that He, along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are One, and being in agreement with my local church mission, vision and values, I commit myself to Almighty God and to the following:	
I realize God's ultimate goal for me is to make me like Christ (1 John 3:2). As I become more and more like Him, I will discover my true self, the person I was created to be. I desire to be conformed to Christ's likeness by reading and obeying God's Word, by studying Jesus' life on earth through the Gospels, by being filled with and daily walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, to my becoming a student, to be challenged to become spiritually mature, and by doing God's work in the world. I believe that Jesus commands me to tell others the Good News and that I must first be a disciple before I can make disciples of others for the Kingdom. As such, I am being discipled by the following person:	
My mentor/coach/discipler/pastor:	
This study was started on:	Notes:
This study was started on.	
This study was completed on:	

#### FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH: AN OVERVIEW

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul affirms the position of the believer - the glorious fact that those who are in Christ Jesus have been showered with God's kindness, chosen for greatness, marked with the Holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit's power, freed from sin's curse and bondage, and brought near to God. As part of God's 'household,' we stand with the prophets, apostles, Jews, Gentiles, and Christ Himself (Ephesians 2:19 - 3:13).

We now have peace with God. Peace with God means that you have been reconciled with Him. There is no more hostility between you and God, no sin blocking your relationship with Him. Peace with God is possible only because Jesus paid the price for your sins through His death on the cross.

As Christians, we must always keep in mind the two-sided reality of the Christian journey. On the one hand, we are complete in Christ (our acceptance with Him is secure). On the other hand, we are continuously growing in Christ (we are becoming more and more like Him). You will feel both the presence of the Holy Spirit and the pressure of sin. You will enjoy the peace that comes from being made right with God, but you will still face daily problems that are approved by God and serve to help you grow in spiritual maturity. If you remember these two sides of the Christian life, you will not grow discouraged as you face temptations and problems. Instead, you can learn to depend on the power available to you from Christ, who lives in you by the Holy Spirit.

"Follow the way of love and
EAGERLY DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS,
ESPECIALLY THE GIFT OF PROPHECY."
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

Notes:

#### **Overview**

"Foundations Of Faith" is an important study for new believers (those in "childhood") or those in the latter stages of spiritual maturity who need a refresher course. It provides a Biblical basis of the basic doctrines of the Bible so that you can go on to spiritual maturity (Hebrews 6:1-3).

"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about ablutions, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits." (Heb 6:1-3)

The writer of Hebrews urges people to graduate from milk to meat, from an immature diet to solid food, for, he says, it is this that is the mark of maturity. "Solid food is for the mature."

Maturity is produced by practice. "Those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." It is produced by acting on what you believe, stepping out upon it, and putting it into practice.

#### **Elementary Teachings**

The basic doctrines of the Christian faith are the subject of this next portion of our study. Doctrines are a collection of teachings on a certain subject. The basic doctrines of the Christian faith are the teachings of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible.

The basic, elementary teachings of our faith are presented in the Bible in the book of Hebrews:

"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about ablutions, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits." (Heb 6:1-3)

#### The foundational doctrines of Hebrews 6:1-3 we will review are:

#### Foundations

The author of Hebrews (most likely the apostle Paul) mentions several foundation-principles. Just as is true of any good foundation, these must be established first, and then built upon. Once these foundational principles are laid, we should continue building, not forgetting what has already been established.

#### Repentance From Dead Works

Repentance from dead works deals with conversion and regeneration; repentance from a spiritually dead state and course. We are to take care that we do not return to sin again.

#### Faith Toward God

Faith toward God embraces the existence of God, His nature, attributes, and perfections, the trinity of persons in the unity of essence, the whole mind and will of God as revealed in His Word, particularly what relates to the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance from dead works and faith toward God are connected.

#### The Doctrine Of Baptisms

The doctrine of baptisms is that of being baptized by a minister of Christ with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is the initial sign or seal of the covenant of grace. It is the symbol, just as a wedding ring is in marriage, that a person is in covenant and will adhere to that covenant. This also includes the doctrine of an inward baptism, that of the Holy Spirit sprinkling the blood of Christ upon our souls for justification as well as the graces of the Holy Spirit for our sanctification.

#### Laying On Of Hands

Laying on of hands is simply confirmation; whether those initiating baptism or the ordination of those into ministry.

#### The Resurrection Of The Dead

The resurrection of the dead deals with the reunion of dead bodies with their souls.

#### Eternal Judgment

Eternal judgment deals with the eternal states; the wicked to everlasting punishment, the righteous to life eternal.

#### Perfection - Maturity

This section provides the final steps in Christian maturity.

"The main purpose of prophecy is to communicate God's message to people, providing insight, warning, correction, and encouragement."

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#### UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS

### Key Verse:

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:9)

#### Introduction

The Bible compares the life of a believer to the construction of a building:

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:9)

Every believer is united in Christ and connected to other Christians to form the Church. The Bible compares the Church to a building:

"And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Ephesians 2:22)

Before a building is erected, a proper foundation is laid. It is important to realize that the strength and quality of the foundation will determine the strength and quality of everything built upon it. The foundation must be laid according to God's biblical blueprint. Jesus is the master builder.

#### Why a building?

To provide a dwelling place for God's Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul stated:

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? (I Corinthians 3:16)

But we are cautioned to build our spiritual life only according to God's plan:

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds." (1 Corinthians 3:10)

#### What is the spiritual foundation?

The spiritual foundation:

- A spiritual foundation is based on God's Eternal Word:
  - "Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." (2 Timothy 2:19)
- A spiritual foundation is a good foundation:
  - "In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." (1 Timothy 6:19)
- A spiritual foundation is based on righteousness:
  - "When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever." (Proverbs 10:25)
- A spiritual foundation is eternal:
  - "In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." (1 Timothy 6:19)
- A spiritual foundation is built on an immovable rock:
  - "He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built." (Luke 6:48)
- The spiritual foundation is founded on the rock Jesus:
  - "Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one." (Isaiah 44:8)
- Jesus Christ is the only foundation for spiritual life:



"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

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"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

#### Jesus is the Foundation

Father God is the One who chose Jesus Christ, His Son, as the foundation for your spiritual life:

"So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed." (Isaiah 28:16)

We see, then, that the foundation of our spiritual lives is not something man made, it is not a denomination, or a ceremony - the foundation is Jesus Christ.

Just as a good foundation is necessary to properly support a building in the natural world, the right spiritual foundation is necessary to support the building of your spiritual life:

"or no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work." (1 Corinthians 3:11-13)

Building with inferior materials or tampering with the foundation are sure fire ways to destroy a building. A believer's life must be built on Christ, not on any other person or principle. Jesus will evaluate each person's contribution to the life of the church, and the day of judgment ("the Day") will reveal the sincerity of each person's faith and work. God will determine whether or not they have been faithful to Jesus' instructions. We are to build according to Jesus' code.

"Once you get into the joy of prayer, things begin to happen. There's something about opening ourselves to God that changes the way we look at the world and each other. It's harder for me to be mean to someone when I remember that God actually watches and hears everything I say."

#### Why are foundations important?

Foundations are very important. David realized this when he asked in the Book of Psalms:

"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3)

In the natural world if the foundation of a building is not properly laid the whole structure can collapse. The same is true in the spiritual world. A wrong foundation will result in a spiritual collapse.

#### **Doctrine** (teaching):

"When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching." (Matthew 22:33)

Building a proper spiritual foundation is part of the doctrine (teachings) of Jesus. This passage records that the people were "astonished at His teaching" (doctrine). Part of that doctrine was the story He told about building on a good foundation.

The writer of Hebrews also refers to building a foundation as part of the doctrine of Christ:

"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God," (Hebrews 6:1)

The writer then continues to list the content of the doctrine of Jesus.

#### The correct foundation:

Obeying God is like building a house on a strong, solid foundation that stands firm when storms come. When life is calm, our foundations don't seem to matter. But when a crisis comes, our foundations are tested. We are to make sure that our lives are built on the

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solid foundation of knowing and trusting Jesus Christ.

Steps for building a good spiritual foundation are presented in Luke 6:47:

"I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice." (Luke 6:47)

These steps are by those:

- 1. Who come to Jesus;
- 2. Hear His words;
- 3. And puts them into practice.

All three steps are required. It is not enough to come to Jesus. You must also listen to what He has said. But coming and listening are not enough. You must also take personal action. A person can come to Jesus, hear what He has to say, but not respond:

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)

You can know the Word and still not act upon it. Jesus is not truly Lord of your life until you respond to His teachings. A good foundation is based on the Word of God. The man who came to Jesus, heard His Word, and then acted on it is called wise. This man made sure that the spiritual foundation of his life was firm. He "dug deep" removing everything between him and the Rock, Jesus Christ.

"He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built." (Luke 6:48)

God's Word is the blueprint that tells us how to build our spiritual lives. The Bible must be accepted as the absolute authority and the process for your spiritual foundation:

"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

The purpose of God's revelation is given in 2 Timothy 3:16:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

The Bible contains instruction in the basic doctrines of Jesus. It also provides reproof and correction for failing to follow these teachings.

#### The incorrect foundation:

The man who built on a wrong foundation heard the Word of God but did not take personal action on what he heard. He is called a foolish man and compared to a man who built without a foundation (Luke 6:49). His house was built on sand instead of the rock (Matthew 7:27).

We build on spiritual sand when we base our lives on the traditions or religious beliefs of man. It is thinking we can make ourselves acceptable and spiritual by our good works, church attendance, or religious ceremonies.

#### The importance of God's Word:

God's Word is the bread of our spiritual lives. We are to hold fast to the Lord and eternal life:

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

"See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us even eternal life." (1 John 2:24-25)

"...whoever continues in the teaching [of Christ] has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9)

#### Those who leave the Word forsake the Lord:

"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:1-2)

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'HE PREDESTINED US TO BE ADOPTED

AS HIS SONS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST,

IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLEASURE

AND WILL" (EPHESIANS 1:5)

"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some." (2 Timothy 2:16-18)

"...as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position." (2 Peter 3:15-17)

"Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God..." (2 John 9)

#### We are to seek doctrinal purity:

"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27)

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

"Without God's grace, no person can be saved. To receive it, we must acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves, that only God can save us, and that our only way to receive this loving favor is through faith in Christ Jesus."

#### **Doctrinal impurity brings error to the Church:**

"I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them." (Romans 16:17)

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work - which is by faith." (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach - and that for the sake of dishonest gain." (Titus 1:9-11)

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." (Jude 3)

If we live in "truth," we will walk in fellowship with Jesus who is the Truth. Because of this, we will love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; we will seek to know Him to the fullest extent.

What we believe determines what we do. A person's character, behavior and destiny are all shaped by what a person holds to be truth (doctrine):

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:9-11)

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God," (Colossians 1:9-10)

As we know His Word we can learn of His will. As we learn of Him, we are enabled by His Holy Spirit to "walk worthy of Him" and to please Him:

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"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5; cf. vv. 3-4)

Doctrine is not just academic. What you believe will greatly affect every aspect of your life - for better or for worse. Correct doctrine expressed in your daily life will result in holy, fruitful living. Incorrect doctrine produces a careless, haphazard, and vain life.

#### Evidence of your love for Jesus

Since Jesus and His Word agree, if we love Jesus, we will love His Word. If we are truly submitted to Jesus' Lordship in our lives, then we will obey His Word. Our obedience to the Word of God is outward evidence of our inward love for Jesus:

"The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him" (1 John 2:4-5)

When you obey God's Word, your love for Him is mature. Your attitude towards God's Word is your attitude towards God. How much does God's Word mean to you? That is how much God means to you. How much do you love and obey His Word? That is how much you love Jesus. There are many people in the world who call themselves Christians, and yet, they do not diligently learn and obey God's Word.

The measure of your love for God's Word is truly the measure of your love for God. Consider the words of Jesus:

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." Then Judas said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:21-23)

If we love Jesus, we will love and obey His Word. If we do not obey the Word of God, it only reveals that we do not truly love Jesus, no matter how much we say we love Him and no matter how often we go to church. Jesus makes Himself known to those who believe and obey His Word. Father and the Son come in a greater measure to our lives, revealing themselves and making themselves known to us, as we obey God's Word.

This is a remarkable promise that as we love and obey Jesus, He will increasingly manifest Himself to us. That means our personal relationship with Him will grow and mature!

The more we believe and obey the Word of God, the more we grow in our personal relationship with Jesus.

This experience of the presence of God should not be confined to times of special prayer or as we attend church meetings; it is to be our daily and continuous promise, passion, and possession. Moment-by-moment we are to draw near to Him, meditating on His Word, believing His Word, obeying His Word - we are to walk in the fullness of His Holy Spirit.

#### **Storms will come:**

Life is filled with storms; you are in one, you've just experienced one, or there are storm clouds on the horizon. Regardless, storms are a part of the journey.

We all face death, disease, and disaster (except those in Christ when He returns again). Acts 14:22 warns that "we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Jesus said:

"WE ALL, LIKE SHEEP, HAVE GONE ASTRAY, EACH OF US HAS TURNED TO HIS OWN WAY; AND THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL." (ISAIAH 53:6)

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"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

No one escapes the storms. Stormy circumstances of life are experienced by all people everywhere. The storms are the same, but what distinguishes people is how they respond to the storms of life. If your spiritual life does not have the right foundation you will fall. Just like the house built on sand, the fall will be great. If your life is built on the right foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word (doctrine), the storm cannot shake you:

> "At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain." (Hebrews 12:26,27)

Eventually the world will crumble, and only God's kingdom will stand. Those who follow Christ's plan are part of this unshakable kingdom, and they will withstand the shaking, sifting, and burning. We are to never put our confidence in what will be destroyed; instead, we are to build our lives on Christ and His unshakable kingdom.

"There is safetu in a multitude of counsel. When we face a major medical situation, we all seek professional counsel. How much greater is our soul condition and the direction of our lives?"

Notes:

#### **Summary:**

- 1. Our Christian lives must be built upon the right foundation for us to grow, to bear fruit and to endure.
- 2. The true foundation for our lives is Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3. The Christian life is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 4. We come to know Jesus through His Word.
- 5. We can only know Jesus through His Word by revelation from the Holy Spirit.
- 6. After the Holy Spirit reveals the Word of God to us, we must obey it.
- We build on the foundation of Jesus Christ in our lives by believing and 0
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8. The Word of God reveals Jesus. As we grow in His Word, we grow in Him. 9. The Scriptures are supremely important in our lives. 10. Our love for and obedience to the Word of God are evidence of our devotion to Jesus.	
LIFE APPLICATION:  1. Write out and commit the Key Verse to memory:	
2. You are God's building. Who occupies that dwelling?	
3. How did you come to know Jesus? Was it academic through study or did Jesus reveal Himself to you in a personal way?	
4. The truth of God's Word will set you free, but it sets you free only as you obey it. Explain:	

OD
"Plans fail for lack of counsel,
BUT WITH MANY ADVISERS THEY SUC-
CEED." (Proverbs 15:22)
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#### UNIT TWO: REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

#### **Key Verse:**

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

#### Introduction:

As we've discovered, Hebrews 6:1-3 lists the elementary teachings of Christ. Taken together, these form the foundation from which believers are to build their spiritual lives. These principles are called the "foundations" of the Christian faith. The first of these principles is "repentance from dead works" and here we will provide a brief introduction to this first principle.

#### Repentance:

Repentance has two sides - turning away from sin and turning toward God. To be truly repentant, we must do both. We can't just say we believe and then live any way we choose (see Luke 3:7,8), and neither can we simply live a morally correct life without a personal relationship with God, because that cannot bring forgiveness from sin.

Some people associate repentance with emotions, like shedding tears and feeling sorry for wrong actions and thoughts. We must understand that repentance is not an emotion. It is a decision leading to an action. Sometimes we might be emotional when we repent, but it is very possible for a person to shed a lot of tears and never truly repent.

"God longs to guide us with love and wisdom rather than punishment. He offers to teach us the best way to go. Accept the counsel written in God's Word and don't let your stubbornness keep you from obeying God."

Repentance is turning away from sin and turning toward God.

#### **Dead works:**

"Dead works" are anything we do apart from God; anything we do not done in faith - anything we do that goes against a conviction leaving us "feeling" guilty or uneasy. These works may be wrong deeds or acts of self-righteousness. It is anything we do that we consciously or unconsciously "do" thinking that we have in some way "earned" God's unmerited favor.

The Bible calls this "sin". Our selfishness is at the heart of sin. It is doing things my way instead of doing things God's way. The prophet Isaiah spoke of God's chosen nation, Israel, when they strayed from Him and compared them to wandering sheep. This love of self results in man going "his own way":

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

Yet God would send His Son Jesus to bring us back into the fold - the promised Messiah who has come and died for our sins. Why did Jesus die for your sins?

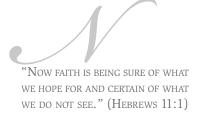
"And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Initially, when you repent from these dead works of selfishness it means you acknowledge the existence of the one true God, realize you are a sinner, ask forgiveness of your sin, and accept God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. Subsequently, just as you began your Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit, so you should grow by the Spirit's power. We must realize that we grow spiritually because of God's work in us by His Spirit, not by following special rules.

#### The origin of sin:

Satan was once an angel called Lucifer. He was in love with himself, his own beauty, and fell into pride and self-centeredness. His rebellion is seen in five "I will" statements he made. Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. Ever since then, he's been busy getting people to sin. He even tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:11). Because of his pride, self-will, and rebellion (sin), Lucifer was cast out of Heaven to earth:

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"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:12-14)

"You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones." (Ezekiel 28:14-16)

Disguised as a crafty serpent, Satan came to tempt Eve. On earth, Lucifer (who became known as Satan) continued his rebellion against God. When God created the first man and woman (Adam and Eve), Satan led them to sin against God. This rebellion is sometimes called "the fall of man", meaning that man fell from righteousness into sin (if you've not read this part of the Bible, stop and do so now. Read Genesis chapters two and three).

Why would God place a tree in the garden and then forbid Adam to eat from it? God wanted Adam to obey, but God gave Adam the freedom to choose. Without choice, Adam would have been like a robot, and his obedience would have been shallow. The two trees provided an exercise in choice, with rewards for choosing to obey and sad consequences for choosing to disobey.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5;12)

We come under the consequences of Adam's sin by virtue of being born (all people come from Adam). Every person born inherits the basic nature of sin and death. All have sinned in Adam - when one man sinned, God thought of all who would descend from Adam as also having sinned.

Just as physical traits like eye and hair color are genetically inherited, the spiritual trait of the genetically spiritual sin nature is also inherited. Each person born is born in sin and faces the penalties of physical and spiritual death.

Satan is responsible for all evil in the world. His rebellion towards God still continues as he tempts man to sin. There is a constant battle in the spirit world for the hearts, minds, and souls of men.

Each person has inherited the basic sin nature. Each person sins individually when he is drawn by this sinful nature to rebel against God:

"but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (James 1:14,15)

God tests you, but he does not tempt you to sin. God allows Satan to tempt you, in order to refine your faith and to help you grow in your dependence on Christ. Satan is the external source of temptation, but his purpose is your destruction. We can resist the temptation to sin by turning to God for strength and choosing to obey His Word.

"All have sinned", but God has provided a way to escape the penalties of sin. Through repentance from dead works and accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord, Master and Savior you can be "saved" from the penalties of sin:

"...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

#### **Summary:**

- 1. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness of sins. Repentance is central to the gospel.
- 2. To "repent" means to regret your way of life, to change your mind about it and to turn away from it and toward God.
- 3. Repentance is more than just feeling sorry; it is an inward decision to change that results in outward actions of change.
- 4. True repentance will result in works of righteousness.
- 5. Repentance is a gift from God, while from your side, you are responsible to repent now.

"God will not settle for mere acknowledgment of His existence. He wants a personal, dynamic relationship with you that will transform your life."

LIFE APPLICATION:  1. Write out and commit the Key Verse to memory:	
2. Define "repentance from dead works".	Notes:
3. How many people are sinners? Give a scriptural reference to support your answer:	
4. Explain the origin of sin:	
5. Door Cod townt you? Why or why not?	
5. Does God tempt you? Why or why not?	
6. What are some examples of "dead works"?	

	Say:
"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faithand this	8. Explain why every human being born is born with sin:
NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD" (EPHESIANS 2:8)	9. What is the only way to escape the penalties of sin?
Notes:	<b>Prayer:</b> Lord God, thank you for the gift of repentance. Thank You for forgiving me. Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to die for me. Help me to understand that I do not have to do anything to make myself more pleasing to You. Help
	me to realize that You love me unconditionally, not because of what I might do for You, but because of what Jesus has already done for me. In Jesus' precious name I thank You. AMEN.
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7. Some people believe that people are basically good. What does the Bible

#### UNIT THREE: FAITH TOWARD GOD

#### **Key Verse:**

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

#### Introduction

The second principle in the foundational mix is "faith toward God". "Faith toward God" refers to your attitude toward God. Some men hate God and rebel against Him. Others are afraid of Him. Your attitude should be one of faith toward God.

Believing that God exists is only the beginning point of your journey; even the demons believe that much (James 2:19, 20). God will not settle for mere acknowledgment of His existence. He wants a personal, dynamic relationship with you that will transform your life. Those who seek God will find that they are rewarded with His intimate presence.

Lord Jesus announced that salvation comes by repentance and belief in the gospel. We must understand that faith and repentance are both necessary for genuine conversion. To turn to God without forsaking sin is not true repentance. To try to forsake sin without turning to God in faith ends in failure. Jesus said:

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)

It is critically important to understand that both repentance and faith toward God are absolutely necessary for salvation.

#### How faith works:

Faith is total dependence on God and a willingness to do His will. Faith is not something we use to put on a show for others. It is complete and humble obedience to God's will, readiness to do whatever He calls us to do. Faith is the conviction based on past experience that God's new and fresh surprises will surely be ours. Faith is sure and certain. These two qualities need a secure beginning and ending point. The beginning point of faith is believing in God's character - He is who He says. The end point is believing in God's promises - He will do what He says. When we believe that God will fulfill His promises even though we don't see those promises materializing yet, we demonstrate true faith (see John 20:24-31).

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

When we believe that God will fulfill His promises even though we don't see those promises materializing yet, we demonstrate true faith (see John 20:24-31).

Faith gives assurance that the things promised in the future are true and that unseen things are real.

Salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think salvation is a complicated process, but it is not. The Bible teaches that if we believe in our hearts and say with our mouths that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved. Real faith comes from the heart:

"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified..." (Romans 10:10)

#### Kinds of faith:

There are different types of faith.

"We are saved to serve Christ and build up the church."


# "CLEARLY NO ONE IS JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD BY THE LAW, BECAUSE, "THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY

FAITH." (GALATIANS 3:11)

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#### Natural faith:

This is a natural trust in things that have proven stable. For example, faith that your car will start when you turn on the ignition. This faith is not "faith toward God". It is a natural faith in certain things around you that you have learned by experience that are usually dependable.

The following types of faith are what we mean when we speak of "faith toward God":

#### Sanctifying faith:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

How have we been crucified with Christ?

- a. Legally, God looks at us as if we had died with Christ. Because our sins died with Him, we are no longer condemned (Colossians 2:13-15);
- b. Relationally, we have become one with Christ, and His experiences are ours. Our Christian life began when, in unity with Him, we died to our old life (see Romans 6:5-11).

In our daily life, we must regularly crucify sinful desires that keep us from following Christ. This can only be done as we surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit's control of our lives.

Because we have been crucified with Christ, we have also been raised with Him (Romans 6:5). Legally, we have been reconciled with God (2 Corinthians 5:19) and are free to grow into Christ's likeness (Romans 8:29). In our daily life, we have Christ's resurrection power as we continue to fight sin (Ephesians 1:19, 20). We are no longer alone, for Christ lives in us through His Holy Spirit - He is our power for living and our hope for the future (Colossians 1:27).

#### **Defensive faith:**

Faith brings victory over the world, providing a spiritual weapon by which we can combat both the temptations and the persecutions of a godless culture and against our spiritual enemy, Satan:

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (Ephesians 6:16)

Our "shield of faith" is a part of our spiritual armor that is not only protective, but also offensive; our armor prepares us for battle, prayer engages the enemy. We must always remember Jesus' words to Peter:

"On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

#### Saving faith:

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1)

Normally, people do not come to saving faith unless they either read the Bible or someone shares the gospel with them. It is the Word of God that the Holy Spirit uses to awaken a response of faith within us (Romans 10:17). Justified is a legal term meaning to acquit, declare righteous, show to be righteous. Faith toward God, combined with true repentance, is saving faith.

We become Christians through God's unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)

As a result of our faith flowing out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves. While no action or work we do can ever obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up His Church.

#### Why faith is so important:

There are two reasons why faith toward God is required:

1. Faith is necessary for salvation: You cannot be saved without faith:

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)

"Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12)

#### 2. You cannot please God without faith:

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

"Faith is a condition of the heart, not the mind. Faith is not mere mental agreement."

Notes:

#### There are varying degrees of faith:

The Bible reveals that there are various levels of faith:

- Those who were faithless (Matthew 17:17);
- Those with little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Luke 12:28);
  Those with great faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9).

The Bible teaches that each person has a certain amount of faith which is given as a gift of God:

> "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." (Romans 12:3)

Every person, saved or unsaved, has some degree of faith because it is through faith we are saved:

> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)

#### The quality of our faith can be increased:

The Bible tells us how to increase the quality of our faith:

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

Even a small amount of faith is very powerful:

"He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

Nothing is impossible if you have even a small amount of faith; faith can move any obstacle.

#### Faith and works:

As said, we become Christians through God's unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we should seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness. Nothing we could ever do nor any work we could ever complete can help us obtain salvation. However, because of the great sacrifice made by God, our salvation should result in acts of service. We are saved to serve Christ and build up His Church. The Bible teaches:

> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9)

In Whom we believe comes first - what we do afterwards validates the sincerity of our faith. The apostle James wrote:

> "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do." (James 2:14-18)

"If we suffer, we shall also

REIGN WITH HIM..." (2 TIMOTHY

2:12)

Deeds of loving service are a verification of our faith in Christ:

"Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (Galatians 3:11)

#### The Christian Life is a Life of Faith

Faith is so central to the Christian life that Christianity itself is called on a number of occasions "the faith" (see 1 Timothy 4:1).

As Christians we "live by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7). A "sincere faith" along with love and a good conscience is "the goal" of God's commandment (1 Timothy 1:5). Through the trials and persecutions of life, our faith is "refined" (1 Peter 1:7).

The most famous chapter about faith in the Bible is Hebrews 11. Read this chapter for an inspiring list of the heroes of faith from the Old Testament. All these men and women believed the Word of God that was given them. They lived and died without seeing the fruit of their faith on earth and yet continued to believe (see Hebrews 11:36-39)

Notes:	<ol> <li>Faith is a condition of the heart, not the mind. Faith is not mere mental agreement.</li> <li>Faith is in the present tense, not future.</li> <li>Faith is not sight. Faith believes the Word of God above the evidence of circumstances or feelings.</li> <li>There is a difference between faith and presumption. True faith is based upon the Word of God and is born out of a daily relationship with Jesus.</li> <li>Faith in your heart will be expressed by the words of your mouth.</li> <li>We are saved by faith alone.</li> <li>Faith and repentance always go hand-in-hand.</li> </ol>
	8. Faith produces a change in your life. Faith without works is a dead faith. 9. There are degrees of faith. Faith grows through hearing and receiving the Word of God.
	LIFE APPLICATION:  1. Provide a description of "faith":
	2. Define the following types of faith: Natural faith:
	Saving faith:
	Sanctifying faith:

Defensive faith:	
3. Give two main reasons why faith toward God is necessary	
4. How can you increase the quality of your faith toward God?	"Scripture often indicates that God leads His children
5. Write out and commit the Key Verse to memory:	through suffering before they reach His glory. Suf- fering is part of the normal Christian life."
6. What is the difference between faith and works?	
7. What is meant by "faith toward God"?	
8. Which is harder: to walk by sight or to walk by faith in God's Word? Why?	Notes:
9. Have you ever considered that God gave you the faith to be saved? Have you thanked Him for that?	
<b>Prayer:</b> Holy Father God, by faith I come to You and thank You that I am saved by faith and by faith alone. I thank You for changing my heart. I acknowledge Your life by working out what You're working in. In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN.	

#### UNIT FOUR: DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS, PART ONE

#### **Key Verse:**

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

#### Introduction

The third foundational principle listed in Hebrews chapter 6 is the doctrine of baptisms. Please notice that "baptisms" is plural. There is more than one kind of baptism mentioned in the New Testament - there are no less than four:

- 1. The baptism of John.
- 2. Christian water baptism.
- 3. The baptism of suffering.
- 4. The baptism in the Holy Spirit.

#### John's Baptism

"And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4)

That the baptism of John was different from Christian water baptism is evident by Paul's response to the believers in Ephesus who had experienced only John's baptism:

"Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:4-5)

John's baptism was a sign of repentance from sin only, not a sign of new life in Christ. Like Apollos (see Acts 18:24-26), these Ephesian believers needed further instruction about the Holy Spirit. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but they did not understand the significance of His death and resurrection or the work of the Holy Spirit. Becoming a Christian involves turning from sin (repentance) and turning to Christ (faith). These "believers" were incomplete.

In the book of Acts, believers received the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways. Usually the Holy Spirit would fill a person as soon as he or she professed faith in Christ. Here that filling happened later for it seems these disciples' knowledge was incomplete (note that this group of believers are disciples - a clear reference that they are true, baptized Christians). Paul resolves this unusual incident by rebaptizing them in water (the only such account recorded in the New Testament).

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance:

"...John's baptism was a baptism of repentance..." (Acts 19:4)

This was a preparatory ministry to make the people ready to receive the coming Messiah. Those who received John's baptism confessed their sins and enjoyed a real experience of repentance and forgiveness of sins, and their lives were changed. However, it was only through the ministry of the Messiah that the people truly received the fullness of abiding, inward peace through the grace of God:

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1)

By itself, John's baptism could never give anyone ultimate righteousness or peace. Rather, it was to prepare the people to receive and respond to the Messiah when He came. This appears to be the significance of John's baptism.

Jesus' Baptism By John

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried



"Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

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to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, but Jesus had never sinned and so did not need to be baptized. John recognized this when he said to Jesus:

"But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:14)

However, Jesus answered:

 $\dots$ "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented." (Matthew 3:15)

"We are saved by faith alone without works of any kind, but a faith that saves will always produce obedience to God."

Jesus was not baptized by John as the outward evidence that He had repented of His sins. Jesus was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." Jesus was setting an example or pattern of obedience for His disciples to follow. He was showing us by example what He expects us to do. Jesus obeyed His Father in the outward act of baptism even though He was sinless. Even so, we who have been saved by His death on the cross should follow Him in the act of baptism "to fulfill all righteousness." By faith in Jesus, we become righteous, and baptism is an outward sign of identification with Him in His death. So, while John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, Christian baptism following Jesus' example "fulfills all righteousness." It completes by an outward act of obedience the inward righteousness which the believer already enjoys by faith in his heart.

Additionally, Jesus' baptism was an outward act of consecration to death for the sins of the world. Baptism is a symbol of death and Jesus' baptism was a type of His future death on the cross when He accepted the place of the sinner and bore his punishment. Jesus did not need to be baptized any more than He deserved to die. But, just as His death on the cross was in substitution for the sins of others, so His baptism in water was a consecration to that substitutionary act. In this way too, Jesus' baptism by John "fulfilled all righteousness."

#### The Baptism of Suffering

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (Mark 10:38)

Jesus here referred to His own sufferings and death on the cross figuratively as a "baptism." He also indicated that His disciples would be called to experience this same immersion in suffering and death:

"We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,..." (Mark 10:39)

This union of Christ and His disciples in suffering is also spoken of by Paul:

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Romans 8:17)

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..." (2 Timothy 2:12)

Scripture often indicates that God leads His children through suffering before they reach His glory. Suffering is part of the normal Christian life.

Most believers are not informed about forthcoming suffering. They believe that once they've accepted Christ Jesus that their lives will be absent from pain, suffering and conflict. However, the journey we are on is a rugged

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adventure, and though filled with the greatest adventure and joy known to man, it is also a narrow path and is sometimes very difficult.

#### **Christian Water Baptism**

To be baptized in water as a Christian was not a suggestion by Jesus; it was His commandment:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (Matthew 28:19)

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

"So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 10:48)

We are saved by faith alone without works of any kind, but a faith that saves will always produce obedience to God. Therefore, we must understand and practice Christian water baptism.

#### Baptism as a symbol

When you wash dirty hands, the results are immediately visible. But repentance happens inside with a cleansing that isn't seen right away. So John the Baptist used a symbolic action that people could see - baptism. The Jews used baptism to initiate converts, so John's audience was familiar with the rite. Here, baptism was used as a sign of repentance and forgiveness. Repent means "to turn," implying a change in behavior. It is turning from sin toward God. Have you repented of sin in your life? Can others see the difference it makes in you? A changed life with new and different behavior makes your repentance real and visible.

#### Why should I be baptized?

Because Jesus was baptized and because He commanded it:

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John." (Mth. 3:13).

John had been explaining that Jesus' baptism would be much greater than his, when suddenly Jesus came to him and asked to be baptized. John felt unqualified. He wanted Jesus to baptize him. Why did Jesus ask to be baptized? It was not for repentance for sin because Jesus never sinned. "To fulfill all righteousness" means to accomplish God's mission. Jesus saw His baptism as advancing God's work. Jesus, the perfect man, didn't need baptism for sin, but He accepted baptism in obedient service to the Father, and God showed His approval.

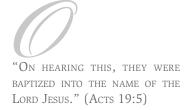
"Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

If you want to follow Christ, you must "repent and be baptized." To repent means to turn from sin, changing the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God's laws. At the same time, you must turn to Christ, depending on Him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves - only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

#### Why was Jesus baptized?

While even the greatest prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) had to confess their sinfulness and need for repentance, Jesus didn't need to admit sin - He was sinless.

Although Jesus didn't need forgiveness, He was baptized for the following reasons:



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- To begin His mission to bring the message of salvation to all people;
- To show support for John's ministry;
  To identify with our humanness and sin;
- To give us an example to follow.

It is not the water of baptism that saves, but God's grace accepted through faith in Christ. Because of Jesus' response to the criminal on the cross who died with Him, we know it is possible to be saved without being baptized (Luke 23:43). Baptism alone, without faith, cannot bring salvation. Those who refuse to believe will be condemned, regardless of whether or not they have been baptized.

#### **New Testament baptism**

Even a casual reading of the New Testament reveals that water baptism was a regular practice.

John came to be called the "Baptist" because of preaching a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin":

> "And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4)

John baptized people as a sign that they had asked God to forgive their sins and had decided to live as he wanted them to live. Baptism was an outward sign of an inner commitment. To be realized, it had to be accompanied by an inward change of attitude leading to a changed life - the work of the Holy Spirit. John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. This looked ahead to Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit would be sent by Jesus to empower believers to do what He had done. John's statement also symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing God's judgment on those who refuse to repent. Everyone will one day be baptized - either now by God's Holy Spirit, or later by the fire of His judgment. Jesus offers to us both forgiveness of sin and the power to live for Him through the Holy Spirit.

John said Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, sending the Holy Spirit to live within each believer. John's baptism with water prepared a person to receive Christ's message. This baptism demonstrated repentance, humility, and willingness to turn from sin. This was the beginning of the spiritual process.

During His personal ministry Jesus' disciples baptized even more people than did John.

> "The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John," (John 4:1)

On the day of Pentecost, the outpouring of God's promised Holy Spirit, Peter exhorted the hearers to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins":

> "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

And 3,000 souls responded to that exhortation on that very day:

"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." (Acts 2:41)

Continuing through the Book of Acts, you find many occasions where converts were baptized immediately after they accepted the Christ who was being preached to them:

> "But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

"It is not the ceremonu that saves us, but faith in Christ's death and resurrection."

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(Acts 8:12)



"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit Lives in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

"And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." (Acts 8:38)
"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again.

He got up and was baptized," (Acts 9:18)

"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (Acts 10:47)

"When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us." (Acts 16:15)

"At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized." (Acts 16:33)

"Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8)

"On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:5)

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16)

The difference between "water baptism" and Holy Spirit "baptism" John said Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, sending the Holy Spirit to live within each believer. John's baptism with water prepared a person to receive Christ's message. This baptism demonstrated repentance, humility, and willingness to turn from sin. This was the beginning of the spiritual process.

When Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (at salvation upon our receiving the Holy Spirit) a person is regenerated by the Spirit's power. Jesus offers to us both forgiveness of sin and the power to live for Him. John's baptism was a baptism of water:

"I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8)

The number of baptismal responses to Jesus' ministry was compared to that of John, so it was unquestionably the same type (John 4:1). Also, it was not Holy Spirit baptism since the disciples performed it and they had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit yet themselves (Acts 1:5). Since the baptism in the Holy Spirit did not occur until Pentecost (Acts 2), the baptizing done by Jesus before that could not have been Holy Spirit baptism.

At Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) the Holy Spirit was made available to all who believed in Jesus. We receive the Holy Spirit (are baptized with Him) when we receive Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be understood in the light of His total work in Christians. The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience. We cannot belong to Christ without His Spirit (Romans 8:9); we cannot be united to Christ without His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17); we cannot be adopted as His children without His Spirit (Romans 8:14-17; Gal. 4:6, 7); we cannot be in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit is the power of our new lives. He begins a lifelong process of change as we become more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Phil. 1:6). When we receive Christ by faith, we begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in us to help us become like Christ. The Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ (Ephesians 2:19-22). The Holy Spirit can be experienced by all, and He works through all (1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4).

#### The importance of water baptism

Since most New Testament water baptisms were administered at the time of conversion (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; 22:16), it seems to mark the entrance of a new believer into the fellowship of disciples (Romans 6:31; Galatians 3:27).

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Baptism seems to mark a transition, a turning point from one state into another (Romans 6:3, 4; 5-10):

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

The cloud and the sea mentioned here refer to Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt when God led them by a cloud and brought them safely through the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). The spiritual food and drink are the miraculous provisions God gave as they traveled through the desert (see Exodus 15; 16). From these verses, many have interpreted this to mean that baptism has to do with our being set free from slavery to sin and being enabled to go on with Jesus.

"The Holy Spirit is a personality; He is not just an impersonal force, power or influence."

"...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 3:20, 21)

Peter says that Noah's salvation through water symbolized baptism, a ceremony involving water. In baptism we identify with Jesus Christ, who separates us from the lost and gives us new life. It is not the ceremony that saves us, but faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism is the symbol of the transformation that happens in the hearts of those who believe (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12). By identifying ourselves with Christ through baptism, we can resist turning back, even under the pressure of persecution.

The meaning of baptism

The Greek word for baptism is baptizo (bap-tid'-zo). It means to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only in the New Testament of ceremonial ablution, especially of the ordinance of Christian baptism; wash; cover wholly with a fluid; to stain (as with dye): to dip.

From the above, it would seem that the intent of the scriptures is that the person is to be placed under the water when being baptized (John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:4).

The timing of baptism

All the water baptisms recorded in the New Testament were baptisms of persons old enough to understand the gospel, to be convicted of sin, and to make a decision to follow Christ. This is easily seen by reading the contexts of the baptisms as cited above.

There are no references to infant baptism recorded in the New Testament. Also, it seems that baptism followed as soon as possible after the person had made a decision to follow Jesus (Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; 16:32,33).

Who should be baptized?

In the "Great Commission" Jesus commanded us to "go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:18). Likewise, in the Book of Mark we are to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that does not believe shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15, 16). The evidence is clear - every disciple of Jesus should be baptized.

#### Summary

- 1. Baptism means an immersion or dipping in fluid.
- 2. There are at least four baptisms mentioned in the New Testament: a. The baptism of John.
  - b. Christian water baptism.

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"Do not get drunk on wine, WHICH LEADS TO DEBAUCHERY. IN-STEAD, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT." (Ephesians 5:18)

c. The baptism of suffering. d. The baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- 3. John's baptism was distinct from Christian baptism and was not sufficient for a believer. It was a baptism of repentance to prepare the people to receive the coming Messiah.
- 4. Jesus was not baptized by John because He needed to repent. He did it to set an example for us to follow.
- 5. Jesus' disciples will be called to experience the same "baptism" in suffering and death that He experienced.

2.	What are the four types of baptisms mentioned in the New Testame.
3.	Why was Jesus baptized?
4.	What is the difference between water baptism and Holy Spirit baptis
5.	Why is water baptism important?
6.	Are infants to be baptized?
 Pr	ayer:
Lo mo lo th	ord Jesus I stand before you and ask you to take my life this week and e where I work, live, in my home, in my family. I know this is what we to do, and I ask that you will grant the grace to understand how t is, and yield myself to you to say the thing that you have taught upour Word. Thank you for showing the way and for the new life I now bray in Jesus' name, Amen.

#### PART TWO: HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

#### **Key Verse:**

"...after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

#### Introduction

John the Baptist told us that Jesus would "baptize" or dispense the inward reality of the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit upon His followers. As we continue part two of the Doctrine of Baptisms, we will review Holy Spirit "baptism".

First, let's review the third Person of the Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. He is the One who inspired the Scriptures, empowers God's people, and convicts the world of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).

"If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit."

#### Who is the Holy Spirit?

- 1. The Holy Spirit is a personality; He is not just an impersonal force, power or influence. This is seen by the following:
  - a) Personal pronouns are always used when speaking of Him. In other words, the pronouns "He," "Him" or "Himself" are used and not "it." The Holy Spirit is not a thing; He has a personality.
  - b) The Holy Spirit possesses attributes of personality such as wisdom and knowledge (Acts 15:28; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12). He has a "mind" or purpose (Romans 8:27). He "determines" to do things (1 Corinthians 12:11). He can be "grieved" (Ephesians 4:30). He teaches (John 14:26), and He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8). He appoints, commissions and commands (Acts 13:2; 20:28). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is said to speak (John 16:13; Acts 1:16; 13:2; Revelation 3:22). All these qualities are attributes of a personality.
- 2. The Holy Spirit is God. He is equal with God and one with God.
  - a) Several triune Scriptures equate the Holy Spirit with God (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).
  - b) Several Scriptures call the Holy Spirit "God":
    - "...how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied to men but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:22)

c) The Holy Spirit possesses Divine attributes. The scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit as omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), and omnipotent (Genesis 1:2).

#### The Holy Spirit was promised:

1. In the Old Testament prophecies:

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16)

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." (Isaiah 44:3; Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 39:29; Galatians 3:14)

2. By the Lord Jesus:

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

"By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

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Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." (John 7:39; cf. 14:15-26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:4-8)

When we receive Christ as Lord, Master and Savior, we also receive His Holy Spirit. Jesus said,

> "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

From the Book of Acts, we discover various terms used to describe people's experience with the Holy Spirit. All these terms are the essential equivalent of Jesus' promise that the church would "be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5; see especially the fulfillment in Acts 2:4, described by Luke as a "filling"). People were:

• "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4; 9:17);

• "they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17);

• "the Holy Spirit fell upon (them)" (Acts 10:4);

• "the Holy Spirit had been poured out on (them)" (Acts 10:45);

- and "the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:6).

Holy Spirit baptism is the initial, onetime experience a person has at the moment they accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. From that moment forward, we are then instructed by the Bible to be continually "filled with" the Holy Spirit so that we can be "empowered" for day-to-day life and ministry.

A person must choose to be continually empowered by the Holy Spirit following conversion – though not necessary for salvation – to realize maximum potential for ministry (Ephesians 5:18 is literally, "Keep on being filled with the Spirit"). This "refilling of the Holy Spirit" is a continual process. Once a person receives the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is then important to be continuously empowered. On the Day of Pentecost 120 disciples (committed followers of Jesus) were "filled" with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). This fulfilled the promise Christ had made to them a few days earlier. He had said, "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). This initial experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of a lifelong experience. God wants us to remain filled with the Spirit.

To illustrate, Christians could be compared to a brand new car. When we accept Christ, construction of our new car, including the fuel tank, is complete. We now have the potential to be useful and to affect lives. But until the car is filled with fuel and the car started, no power is realized. So it is when we are "filled with and empowered" by the Holy Spirit. We open our lives to God and the Holy Spirit pours into and through us. It is then we become most effective in God's service.

As with the fuel tank, this power-generating experience is not intended to be a onetime occurrence. It is to be an ongoing process. When our spiritual power runs low, we need to return to the Source and let the blessed Holy Spirit provide fresh power. This happened to the early followers of Jesus. They had already been baptized in the Spirit, but later on, when persecution arose, they needed to be refueled spiritually; so they prayed to the Lord once again and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31).

The Christian life is a life lived on a spiritual plane. The entry point of becoming a Christian begins with conversion - being rightly related to the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian is someone who comes to Christ in faith, accepting His sacrifice on the Cross as sufficient payment for sin (Ephesians 2:8, 9; 1 John 5:11, 12).

To live the Christian life, we must continue under the control of the Holy Spirit:

JUST AS YOU RECEIVED CHRIST Jesus as Lord, continue to walk IN HIM." (COLOSSIANS 2:6)

<sup>&</sup>quot;...just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him." (Colossians 2:6)

We discover that we become a Christian because we "receive Christ Jesus the Lord." We become empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit as we "walk in Him."

Please note: it is possible for a person to receive Christ, be converted, and not be controlled by the Holy Spirit. To live in the spiritual plane, we must see each moment from the spiritual viewpoint. Nothing we do is coincidental, or accidental, or by luck. God is God and He is in control whether we realize, accept, or reject this truth.

It is also important to note that if you have received Christ Jesus as your Lord, Master and Savior, you have the Holy Spirit. Don't let anyone try and convince you that you need more of the Holy Spirit. We do not need to say, "Come, Holy Spirit." He's already present within your heart (the heart is the place where the Holy Spirit resides). The simple truth is that if you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit is God. He is one with God and equal with God."

#### What does it mean to be "filled with the Holy Spirit?"

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18)

We are commanded as Christians to "be filled with the Spirit." A Spirit-filled believer is one who is controlled by the Holy Spirit and not by any other kind of spirit.

The Greek verb translated "be filled" is worthy of our study and will amplify our understanding. "Be filled" is:

- 1. In the present tense: it is something we can experience and enjoy now;
- 2. In the imperative mood (a command): this is not optional;
- 3. In the passive voice: being filled is not something a believer achieves through his or her own strength, will, or desire, but that it is done for a believer by the Holy Spirit as the believer submits to His control;
- 4. In the plural form: in other words, being filled is not reserved for some particular group or denomination, but is for the universal Body of Christ and for you today.

As Spirit-filled believers serve the Lord in their day-to-day, getting up, going to school or work lives, there is a tendency to become more "self-led" - relying more on our fleshly desires and responses than the Holy Spirit's presence and power. It becomes important to ask for a refueling by the Holy Spirit in order that He is given control over our lives. As said, the command in Ephesians 5:18 is literally, "Keep on being filled with the Spirit." Herein lies the key to Spirit-filled living. The Spirit-filled life is a continuous process of receiving and giving, of being filled and sharing with others, of receiving power from God and spending it in His service.

#### The Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience:

We cannot belong to Christ without His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9); we cannot be united to Christ without His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17); we cannot be adopted as His children without His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7); we cannot be in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).

The Holy Spirit is the power of our new lives

He begins a lifelong process of change as we become more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6). When we receive Christ by faith, we begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in us to help us become like Christ.

To be empowered by the Holy Spirit is a gift for every believer for all generations and an experience for you today that will dynamically increase your

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effectiveness in worship, witness, and spiritual warfare. The following are considerations regarding the Holy Spirit:



"Then he put his hands on her, AND IMMEDIATELY SHE STRAIGHT-ENED UP AND PRAISED GOD." (LUKE 13:13)

1. You must be a born-again believer: The person who is going to be empowered by the Holy Spirit must have the indwelling Spirit and must belong to Jesus (Romans 8:9).

2. You must ask: The Bible says, if you ask for the Holy Spirit, that prayer will be answered (Luke 11:13). Then, you must continually ask for the infilling presence of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

3. You must surrender: The Apostle Paul made this clear in the Book of Romans when he said, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1).

4. You must be willing to obey the Spirit: God does not give this blessing/power to someone and allow him or her to say, "I'll pick and choose what I like." If you want to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, you must be prepared to obey the Spirit (Acts 5:32).

5. You must believe: the apostle Paul said, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:2). Faith is key. A person must believe that just as when they received Jesus as Lord and Savior they can receive the fresh and continual empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the same way.

6. You must use what you've been given: Having asked, having received, having been willing to obey, having believed, you must now exercise. This is why discipling (a seasoned, more spiritually mature saint walking alongside a younger born-again believer) is

soned, more spiritually mature saint walking alongside a younger born-again believer) is so vitally important in today's church. Just as parents serve in this position in the home,

spiritual parents should function in the same model in the church.

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- 1. Jesus promised that His followers would receive the "baptism" or indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit.
- 3. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or power. He has personality.
- 3. The Holy Spirit is God. He is one with God and equal with God.
- 4. To live the Christian life, we must continue under the control of the Holy
- ing filled and sharing with others, of receiving power from God and spending

# Spirit. 5. It is possible for a person to receive Christ, be converted, and not be controlled by the Holy Spirit. 6. We are commanded as Christians to "be filled with the Spirit." 7. The Spirit-filled life is a continuous process of receiving and giving, of be-8. The Holy Spirit works in us to help us become like Christ. LIFE APPLICATION: 1. What are some of the attributes of the Holy Spirit? 2. What divine attributes does the Holy Spirit possess? \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When does the indwelling presence or "baptism" of the Holy Spirit take place in a believer's life?

4. Can a believer be born again and not walk in the fullness of the Holy

Spirit? Why or why not?	
5. What does it mean to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit?	
6. What does it mean to be controlled by the Holy Spirit?	"Laying-on of hands is not the only way people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit."
7. What are the four tenses of "be filled"? Why is it important to understand and apply these?	Notes:
Prayer: Father, I pray that you will teach me to draw upon the well of water within,	
to know that every demand made upon me is a demand made upon you, and that you are prepared, ready, to live your life through me in every situation and thus manifest your grace. Holy Spirit I invite you to take control of my life right now. I thank you in Christ's name. AMEN.	

#### UNIT FIVE: LAYING-ON OF HANDS

#### **Key Verse:**

"So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders." (Acts 14:3)

#### Introduction

The doctrine of the laying-on of hands is the fourth principle in the foundation of the Christian faith. Laying-on of hands is an act in which one person places his hands on someone else in an act of faith.

The New Testament records several instances for the laying on of hands.

#### **Supernatural signs:**

Jesus often times laid hands on people during the course of His ministry:

"He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them." (Mark 6:5)

"When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them." (Luke 4:40)

"Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God." (Luke 13:13)

In His final message to the disciples at the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus listed several supernatural signs:

"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." (Mark 16:17,18)

One of these supernatural signs was that "they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mark 16:17-18 tells us that this ministry is to continue.

We see that the laying-on of hands in the name of Jesus was used to minister physical healing to the sick. The laying-on of hands is an act of faith and obedience to God's Word. Its effectiveness does not depend on our subjective feelings.

The book of Acts records how God used the laying-on of hands by believers to perform miraculous healings and other supernatural signs confirming His Word:

"So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders." (Acts 14:3)

"The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade." (Acts 5:12)

"Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" (Acts 19:11)

"And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." (Acts 28:8)

"JESUS SAID TO HER, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME WILL LIVE, EVEN THOUGH HE DIES; AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?" (JOHN 11:25,26)

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**Baptism of the Holy Spirit:** 

Another reference of laying-on of hands took place when believers received the Holy Spirit. There are five examples recorded in the book of Acts of how people received the Holy Spirit. The first example is that of the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The other examples are of the new converts in Samaria in Acts 8:14-20; Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:17; Cornelius and his family in Acts 10:44-46; and the disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-6.

In three of these five examples those seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit were ministered to by other believers through the laying-on of hands:

-Acts 8:18 states that "through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given."

-In Damascus, Ananias laid his hands on Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

-In Ephesus, the disciples to whom Paul ministered received the Holy Spirit after Paul laid his hands on them.

Laying-on of hands is not the only way people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the upper room in Jerusalem and in the house of Cornelius people received the experience without anyone laying hands on them.

Imparting spiritual gifts:

Another purpose for the laying-on of hands was to impart spiritual gifts. Paul wrote Timothy:

"Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." (1 Timothy 4:14)

Paul refers again to Timothy's spiritual experience:

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." (2 Timothy 1:6)

Timothy's spiritual gift had been given to him when Paul and the elders had laid their hands on him and set him apart for ministry (1 Timothy 4:14). God gives all Christians gifts to use to build up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4-31), and He gives special gifts to some through church leaders, who serve as God's instruments (in Timothy's case, it was the laying-on of hands with prophecy and is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to reveal His will and purposes to believers).

Laying-on of hands was combined with the gift of prophecy to direct, encourage, and strengthen Timothy to fulfill his God-given ministry.

Commissioning those in ministry:

Another purpose for laying-on of hands is to commission Christian workers. "Commission" means to authorize, delegate, or send on a mission:

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus." (Acts 13:2-4)

The Bible indicates God had already spoken privately to Paul and Barnabas about the work He wanted them to do before He spoke publicly to the church leaders. The public revelation was a confirmation of the call they already had received.

Summary:

1. The laying on of hands is one of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

"There are many events which will happen in the world at this end of time. Only God knows the exact timing of these events."

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"HE WAS DELIVERED OVER TO DEATH FOR OUR SINS AND WAS RAISED TO LIFE FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION." (Ro-MANS 4:25)

2. It was an established practice in the Old Testament.

3. In the New Testament, there are seven distinct purposes for which the 3. In the New Testament, there are seven distinct p laying on of hands is used:
To impart a blessing.
The ministry of healing.
To receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
To impart spiritual gifts.
To commission ministries.
To appoint elders in the local church.
To appoint men for specific acts of service in the church.

4. We should recognize and avoid the abuses and excesses without drawing back from the New Testament practice of the laying-on of hands; everything should be done decently and orderly.

LIFE APPLICATION:  1. What are the various reasons for the laying on of hands revealed in the New Testament?
3. Write out and commit the Key Verse to memory:
4. Give a Bible reference which confirms that the laying on of hands was t continue after Jesus returned to heaven.
5. Define "laying on of hands":
6. Who does the Bible specifically name as qualified to practice the layin on of hands?
Prayer: Lord Jesus, how frequently I fail to understand the truth of your promise to me that you have come to live within me, and that your life can be as visible in me today as it ever was in the first-century. Grant to me today, Lord, the faith to lay hold of this promise and to make visible in my life, moment-by moment, this same sweet freshness and sovereign moving of the Holy Spiri Flame of God, I ask you to touch me, to burn away the dross and to set mafire and aflame with that which manifests the character, the life of Lor Jesus. I ask in Jesus' name, AMEN.

## UNIT SIX: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

## **Key Verse:**

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25,26)

#### Introduction

There are two remaining foundational doctrines of the Christian faith - remember, these are just the basics; every Christian should know these foundational truths plus more! The last two we'll review are the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. In the study of these two remaining doctrines, the Bible takes us by revelation beyond the present time into the future of eternity.

By the act of creation, God brought the present world into being with the order of time including the past, present, and future (see Genesis l). Someday God will bring this present world to an end and time, as we now know it, will cease to be.

The Bible reveals that for the world as a whole, the end of time will come at a special moment ordained by God. There are many events which will happen in the world at this end of time. Only God knows the exact timing of these events.

As individuals, however, a moment awaits each of us when "time shall be no longer". This is when we come to the end of our earthly lifetime and step from time into eternity - the final frontier. For each person, the end of physical life is the end of time and just the beginning of things to come.

There are some mysteries surrounding the end of time and eternity which the Bible does not explain. But the doctrine of the "resurrection of the dead" provides some knowledge of the end of time and eternity which follows.

## **Definition**

The meaning of the word "resurrection" is a raising or rising up. It means to cause to rise or raise up from the dead.

The Bible confirms that Jesus is the "resurrector", the one who will resurrect the dead:

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25)

## Importance of the resurrection:

Why is the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead so important to the Christian faith?

"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15:13,14)

Believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary to become a true believer:

"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Paul presents the resurrection of Jesus as a part of the message of the gospel:

"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on

"Baptism in water is an outward sign of death to the old life of sin and the spiritual resurrection of the believer in Jesus Christ."

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## The resurrection confirms Jesus Christ is the Son of God:

"and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 1:4)

The resurrection confirms Jesus is supreme over all created beings.

That power is the same divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when God raised Him from the dead and gave Him the place of supreme honor in Heaven - a place that is infinitely superior to any conceivable command, authority, power or control, and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or in the world to come:

"which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." (Ephesians 1:20-23)

## The resurrection confirms that believers are justified:

"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." (Romans 4:25)

## The resurrection means death is defeated:

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14)

# Because of the resurrection of Jesus, believers will also be resurrected and have new bodies:

"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51,52)

"who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (Philippians 3:21)

## Resurrection of believers:

The Bible speaks of the present resurrection of believers. This means those who were once spiritually dead in sin are now made alive spiritually through Jesus Christ:

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:1-5)

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins" (Colossians 2:13)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

## Outward sign of this resurrection

Baptism in water is an outward sign of death to the old life of sin and the spiritual resurrection of the believer in Jesus Christ. But it is not only water



"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 12:3)

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baptism that confirms the spiritual resurrection of the believer. It is the new life which he lives:

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection." (Romans 6:4,5)

## **Evidence of this resurrection:**

Jesus provided many evidences of His resurrection. These included the empty tomb, the message of the angels, and His visible appearances after His resurrection. There are also evidences which confirm the spiritual resurrection of believers. They include the following:

-Death To Sin Resulting In A New Life:

Spiritual resurrection results in death to sin. The believer does not live like he used to live. He is dead to the evil things of the world and alive in Jesus:

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11)

#### -A New Master:

Spiritual resurrection makes Jesus the master of your life. Instead of living for yourself, you live to serve Him:

"And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

## -New Life Purpose:

A new life purpose results from spiritual resurrection. Instead of concern about temporal things of the world such as material gain, ambition, etc., the attention of believers is focused on eternal things:

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." (Colossians 3:1,2)

## The Glorified Bodies of the Resurrection

The fact that the righteous will be given new, glorified bodies is confirmed by Jesus in Matthew 22:

"Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead - have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matthew 22:29-32)

The nature of our new bodies is described at length by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:

"But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body." (1 Corinthians 15:35-38)

From these verses, we see that while there is a direct continuity between the body that is buried and the body that is resurrected, the resurrected body will undergo definite and obvious changes.

"All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another." (1 Corinthians 15:39-40)

Paul points out here that there is already a precedent in nature for the idea of different kinds of bodies. Our glorified bodies will be different from our natural, fleshly bodies:

"Spiritual resurrection makes Jesus the master of your life. Instead of living for yourself, you live to serve Him."

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"The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead..." (1 Corinthians 15:41-42)

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"FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIM." (JOHN 3:17)

Paul states that there will be a difference between the glorified bodies of the redeemed. They will all be the same kind of glorified body, but there will be many different orders of glory among them. This same idea is found in Daniel 12:

> "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 12:3)

Then, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul goes on concerning the resurrection of our bodies:

"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.... For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:42-53)

## **Summary:**

- 1. The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of Christianity and is of central importance as the heart of the gospel message.
- 2. The Bible confirms that Jesus is the "resurrector", the one who will resurrect the dead.
- 3. Believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary to become a true believer.
- 4. Baptism in water is an outward sign of death to the old life of sin and the spiritual resurrection of the believer in Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual resurrection makes Iesus the master of your life. Instead of living

for yoursel 6. The boo	lf, you live to serv	ve Him.	capable of sufferin	
	PPLICATIO	-	emory:	
2. Define t	he word "resurred	etion":		
gospel was	s explained to you	, did you fully u	us Christ important nderstand that your sed Jesus from the	salvation is

4. What is meant by the "present spiritual resurrection of believers"?		
5. What are the evidences of the spiritual resurrection of the believer?		"The standard by which we will be judged is the fixed standard of the Word of God."
6. What outward act signifies the spiritual resurrection of the believer?		
7. Do you always include Jesus' resurrection in your presentation of the Gospel? Is this an important point?		S:
8. Have you ever realized that without Jesus' resurrection you could not be saved? Explain:	ee ———————————————————————————————————	
Prayer: Father, thank you for this great hope, a hope that thrills my heart, a hope that my life will not slip into oblivion after a few years here, but that there is great and mighty life that lies beyond this to which I have entrance throug my relationship with a living Lord, who walks and lives and works amon men and women today. Grant that I may in simple, childlike faith live out the reality of living for and with you for all eternity. I pray in Jesus' name, AMEN	a — gh ng ne	

## UNIT SEVEN: ETERNAL JUDGMENT

## **Key Verse:**

"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us." (Isaiah 33:22)

#### Introduction

Eternal judgment is the last of the six basic, foundational principles of the Christian faith listed in Hebrews 6.

In the Old Testament the word "judgment" is used two ways. One refers to the statutes, testimonies, and laws of God. The other way concerns God's judgment on men and nations. The latter meaning is how the word "judgment" is used in the New Testament. It is this meaning that we will review in this portion of our study.

## Definition

The word "to judge" means to separate or make a difference between. This includes bringing to trial, examining evidence, determining guilt or innocence, and deciding the penalty for sin. Eternal judgment is the great and final judgment spoken of in the Bible which determines the eternal destiny of all souls.

## The Judges

• God

"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us." (Isaiah 33:22)

"to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect," (Hebrews 12:23)

God judges the sinful behavior of mankind. God's real desire is not judgment but that all men come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ:

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:17)

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:30,31)

#### • Jesus

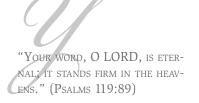
God has given Jesus authority to judge:

"Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man." (John 5:22-27)

#### • The saints

In the final judgment true believers will help judge the world. The word "saints" in this verse means all true believers. They will help judge the "world" (the unrighteous):

"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!" (1 Corinthians 6:2,3)



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The standard of judgment:

The standard by which everyone will be judged is the Word of God. From Romans 2:12-16 we learn that people will be judged according to the revelation they have:

• Jews: The standard of judgment for Jews will be the written Law;

• Pagans: The standard for those who have never been exposed to God's Word will be the unwritten law of conscience and nature (these are those individuals we think about when we ask, "How will God judge someone who is stranded on an island and no one ever told them about the gospel?");

• Unbelievers: Unbelievers will be judged for their sins;

• Believers: Believers, who have been freely forgiven of sins because of Christ's work (Romans 3:21-26), will be given various degrees of reward in heaven according to their actions here on earth (see also Mth. 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:29; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:9, 10). In Romans 2:6 the phrase "according to his deeds" does not contradict the gospel message of salvation as a free gift that cannot be earned (see Romans 1:16, 17; 3:20, 23,24,28,30; 4:5; 6:23).

"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day." (John 12:47,48)

People will not be judged on the basis of their wealth, social position, nationality, or education."

"The eternal judgment will

be without partiality. This

means without special favor.

It is not the ethnicity, standards, creeds, or traditions of man by which we will be judged. It is not on the basis of organizational or denominational rules. The standard by which we will be judged is the fixed standard of the Word of God:

"Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." (Psalms 119:89)

## The reason for judgment:

The Bible reveals judgment is necessary because of sin against God's law, ungodliness, unrighteousness, unbelief, trespasses, and evil deeds. Although these are different words, they are all words for sin:

## Sin against God's Law:

"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law." (Romans 2:12)

## Ungodliness:

"By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (2 Peter 3:7)

"to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 15)

## Unrighteousness:

"if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment." (2 Peter 2:9)

## Unbelief:

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:18)

## Trespass:

"Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men." (Romans 5:18)

#### Evil deeds

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)

## The principles of divine judgment:

Worldly principles of judgment vary from nation to nation. The standards may vary from state to state within a nation and from city to city. Worldly principles of judgment and punishment vary because people interpret cer-

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"BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A THIEF. THE HEAVENS WILL DISAPPEAR WITH A ROAR; THE ELEMENTS WILL BE DESTROYED BY FIRE, AND THE EARTH AND EVERY-THING IN IT WILL BE LAID BARE." (2 PETER 3:10)

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tain acts in different ways. The same act interpreted as wrong in one culture may be acceptable in another. For example, killing of a cow is viewed quite differently in America, where it is used for meat, than in India where cows are considered sacred by some people.

The judgment of man varies because the standards by which they judge vary. But the principles of God's judgment do not change. God judges:

## On the basis of His Word:

God's law and the principles of judgment are fixed in His Word:

"Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." (Psalms 119:89)

## According to knowledge:

Men and nations will be judged according to the knowledge of God which was given them. Jesus said some would be judged more severely than the cities of Sodom, Gomorrha, Ninevah, Tyre, and Sidon. These were evil cities mentioned in the Old Testament which God judged and punished.

The reason Jesus pronounced more severe judgment on some New Testament cities was because these cities had more revelation of God. Jesus Himself had ministered in these cities and performed mighty works of healing and deliverance. Still, the people of these cities would not repent. Jesus warned:

"Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." (Matthew 11:21-24)

"The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here." (Matthew 12:41)

A general revelation of God is given to all men through the wonders of creation:

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

This general understanding of God given to all men through creation is the basic standard by which men will be judged. Those who receive additional revelation by hearing God's Word will be judged by a higher standard of knowledge.

## Individually:

Each person will be judged individually:

"The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him." (Ezekiel 18:20)

Judgment determining individual eternal destiny will not be on a group basis. It will be on an individual basis.

## According to truth:

Paul wrote:

"Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth." (Romans 2:2)

## On the basis of personal conduct:

Each of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and will be judged according to our deeds. The Bible also calls this judgment according to "works":

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

"God "will give to each person according to what he has done." (Romans 2:6)

"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." (1 Peter 1:17)

"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books." (Revelation 20:12)

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

Without partiality:

The eternal judgment will be without partiality. This means without special favor. People will not be judged on the basis of their wealth, social position, nationality, or education.

"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." (1 Peter 1:17)

To have respect of persons means to be influenced in judgment by some external factor of appearance, relationship, position, wealth, etc.

God's judgment is not influenced by any of these things:

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

According to the Law:

"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law." (Romans 2:12)

According to righteousness:

"He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice." (Psalm 9:8)

"they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth." (Psalm 96:13)

"For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." (Romans 2:5)

"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:8)

According to motives and thoughts:

"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God." (1 Corinthians 4:5)

"This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares." (Romans 2:16)

The time of judgment:

The Bible indicates there is a past, present, and future judgment:

Past judgment:

The Bible contains a history of God's past judgment. From the time of Adam and Eve it records God's judgment of nations and individuals.

The Bible records two special past judgments that are important to believers. These are the judgments of Satan and the world. God has already passed judgment and set the penalties for both.

-Satan and his angels:

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God passed final judgment on Satan:

"Believers will be judged for their works and rewarded accordingly."

Notes:

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (1 Corin-

THIANS 4:2)

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"and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned." (John 16:11)

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2:15)

Satan has already been judged by God. He is allowed limited activity until he is cast into the lake of fire at the end of the world but he is already condemned as guilty. Satan's angels, who left their original position in Heaven as angels of God to join him in rebellion, are also already condemned:

"And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day." (Jude 1:6)

## -The world:

Jesus said:

"Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out." (John 12:31)

Because it is ruined by the presence of sin, the physical world is already condemned by God's judgment. The Bible says the world will be destroyed by fire:

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare." (2 Peter 3:10)

**Present judgment:** 

There is a present judgment that goes on continuously. All men are presently judged as sinful or righteous before God. The present judgment of man is on the basis of whether or not he has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior:

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:18)

God's present judgment on unbelievers is shown by His wrath because they hinder the truth:

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness," (Romans 1:18)

God's present judgment of believers is in love. He corrects them when they do wrong:

"And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons." (Hebrews 12:5-8)

Just as a natural father corrects his children, God judges the behavior of His children. If they sin, God corrects them in love just as a father does his son. God's chastisement (correction) of His children is for a specific purpose:

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)

**Future judgment:** 

It is the future judgment to which Paul refers in Hebrews 6 when he speaks of "eternal judgment". Eternal judgment happens after death:

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment," (Hebrews 9:27)

After a person dies it is immediately determined whether or not he enters the presence of God. The destinies of the righteous and the unrighteous are different after death. But the final judgment confirming their eternal destinies occurs after the end of the world and the resurrection:

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:" (2

Timothy 4:1)

"Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 1:14,15)

## The locations of final judgment:

There are three locations where final judgment will occur:

1. The judgment seat of Christ:

Those judged here will be all true believers. They will be judged for their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10, 11). All believers will stand before this seat of Christ and give an account of themselves. This is not a judgement concerning their salvation, for that was settled at Calvary; it is a judgment of their work, character and service for the Lord:

"You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat." (Romans 14:10)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

2. The throne of His Glory:

The second place of judgment is called "the throne of Christ's glory". Those judged here will be those who remained on the earth during the tribulation period:

"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection." (Revelation 20:4,5)

## 3. The Great White Throne:

The final place of judgment is called the "great white throne". Those judged here are the remaining dead who will be resurrected at the close of the Millennium. (This is the second resurrection called the resurrection of the unjust.)

The Great White Throne judgment is recorded in Revelation 20:11-15. The unrighteous will be judged and because of their sin cast into a lake of fire along with Satan and his angels.

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11-15)

## **Eternal Judgment:**

There will be only two basic divisions of people who are tried in the final judgments: Believers and unbelievers:

## Believers:

Believers will be judged for their works and rewarded accordingly:

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Believers will be judged by how they have built their lives on the foundation of God's Word: "If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

"The righteous are destined to eternal life in the presence of God."

Notes:



"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)

Notes:		

In the natural world, wood, hay, and stubble all grow visibly above the ground. They burn easily. They are examples of works done by believers to be seen by man. The motive for these works is wrong.

Gold and silver are not destroyed by fire. In the natural world, these substances develop below the ground unseen by man. They are an example of works done with the right motive, not done just to be seen and praised by man. They are works which are valuable in God's Kingdom because they are done with the right motive.

The works of true believers will be judged on the basis of obedience. The parables of the talents in Matthew 25 and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19 were told by Jesus to illustrate this truth (see Mth. 25 and Luke 19).

In both these parables, servants were judged on the basis of what they had done with what they had been given. They were told to invest funds for their masters. Servants who were disobedient were judged unfaithful.

Just like these parables, our Master has given us a responsibility. That responsibility is known as the Great Commission:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19,20)

We are to take what God has given us, the message of the gospel, and reproduce it by sharing it with others throughout the world, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded. As we obey this Commission, we are investing what God has given us and increasing it.

Some believers have greater responsibilities than others in this Commission. Some are called as "apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, teachers". But every born-again believer is responsible for making disciples.

Believers will be judged on the basis of their faithfulness to the responsibility God has given them:

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Believers will not be judged on the basis of abilities, education, or spiritual gifts. They will be judged on the basis of obedience and faithfulness to what God has given them to do. The judgment of true believers is not one of condemnation. That is, the true believer cannot be condemned to eternal punishment. Through accepting Christ, he or she has already passed from spiritual death to eternal life:

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)

A true believer is one who has repented from sin, turned toward God and shown faith toward God by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. He or she is the person who has became and lived as a new creature in Jesus Christ. Paul confirmed:

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," (Romans 8:1)

When a sinner comes to Jesus his or her record of former sins is erased by God. When a believer sins, he needs only to repent and confess his sin and God erases it from the record:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

## **Unbelievers:**

The unrighteous will be judged and punished for sin. God keeps a record called the "book of life" in which is listed the names of those who have repented, accepted Jesus Christ, and become true believers. Those who have rejected Him will be judged for sin and doomed to eternal punishment. Their names are not in the book of life:

"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:15)

It is here that we must present a stern note of caution - "I will not blot out his name" (Rev. 3:5) assures true believers of the certainty of the Lord's promise. Noted theologian Matthew Henry wrote, "Christ will not blot the names of his chosen and faithful ones out of this book of life; men may be enrolled in the registers of the church, as baptized,

as making a profession, as having a name to live, and that name may come to be blotted out of the roll, when it appears that it was but a name, a name to live, without spiritual life; such often lose the very name before they die, they are left of God to blot out their own names by their gross and open wickedness. But the names of those that overcome shall never be blotted out."

"He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels." (Revelation 3:5)

The destiny of the righteous:

The righteous are destined to eternal life in the presence of God. The presence of God is called Heaven. In the Bible it is described by several names:

The Father's House:

Jesus described it as "His Father's house", a place of home, rest, and fellowship:

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2)

A heavenly country:

The Bible compares Heaven to a country to which we are traveling just as Israel traveled to the Promised Land:

"Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." (Hebrews 11:16)

A city:

Heaven is compared to a city:

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." (Revelation 21:2)

The Bible reveals some wonderful things about Heaven. It is a place of:

**Holiness:** 

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27)

Joy:

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:2)

**Beauty:** 

"The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass." (Revelation 21.18)

Service:

"Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them." (Revelation 7:15)

**Reigning with Christ:** 

Jesus promised...

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Revelation 3:21)

Worship:

The Bible records that those in Heaven worship God:

"The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped." (Revelation 5:14)

Light and glory:

"The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." (Revelation 21:23)

"God does not send people to Hell. Man chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus Christ and living a sinful life."

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"...SO THEN, DEAR FRIENDS, SINCE YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS,

MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE FOUND SPOTLESS, BLAMELESS AND AT PEACE

WITH HIM." (2 PETER 3:11-14)

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A place of new perspective:

Being in Heaven will give us a new perspective on everything:

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." (Isaiah 65:17)

The dwelling place of God:

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." (Revelation 21:3)

**Eternal destiny of the unrighteous:** 

Hell is the eternal destiny of the wicked. There are four words used for hell in the Bible:

#### Sheol or Hades:

Is seen to be down, a place for the spirits of the departed dead; place for departed human spirits, especially the unsaved, since the resurrection of Christ, as well as Old Testament unregenerate persons.

#### Tartarus:

Another translation for hell found only once in the New Testament; appears to be the place for sinning angelic spirit beings held until the Great White Throne.

## Abyss:

Third division in the lower down department of the earth; called the Abyss, the Deep, the bottomless pit; appears that Sheol and the abyss are connected; a prison; a deeper pit than Sheol or Hades; a place for demon spirits.

#### Gehenna:

Final and eternal Hell; the Valley of Hinnom; Jesus spoke more of this final hell than all other Bible writers; the Lake of Fire; currently not occupied; the fallen angels and the wicked dead and demonic spirits; for those who reject Christ and resist the Holy Spirit – those who have chosen to live a life of sin here on earth; the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be its first inhabitants (Rev. 20:1-10); the Devil at the close of the 1,000 year period (Rev. 20:1-15); the fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6); the fallen demonic spirits (Luke 8:26-31); the unredeemed and unregenerate of all mankind after the Great White Throne judgment – all whose names are not written in the Book of Eternal Life (Rev. 14:9-11; Hosea 13:14; Is. 25:6-8; 9; 1 Cor. 15:26, 54-55).

## Hell is a place of:

## Extreme suffering:

"And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:10)

#### Memory and remorse:

"In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony." (Luke 16:23-25)

## Unsatisfied desire:

"So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." (Luke 16:24)

## Contempt:

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2)

## Wicked companionship:

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

## Hopelessness:

"When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing." (Proverbs 11:7)

## **Eternal punishment:**

Hell was originally prepared for Satan and his angels. Because of sin, man is also destined for eternity in Hell unless He is redeemed by Jesus Christ:

> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)

Punishment for the wicked is eternal. The same word that is used for eternal life in the Bible (John 3:15) and the eternal God (I Timothy 1:17) is used to describe eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2). If one of these is temporary, then the other two would have to be temporary as well.

There is no way to escape the conclusion that if God is everlasting and eternal life is everlasting, then so is punishment in hell. God does not send people to hell. Man chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus Christ and living a sinful life. God has provided a way of escape from eternal punishment through the plan of salvation. He is not willing that any should perish:

> "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"They are angels who fell with Satan, some of which were bound while others are still loose"

#### Satan and demons:

The Bible teaches the existence of Satan – the originator of sin and the king over a host of fallen angels and spirits who carry out his work surrounding earth. Know this - Jesus conquered Satan and the kingdom of darkness at Calvary; Satan's activities are limited by God, especially toward God's children - we are called to submit to God, resist Satan, and he will flee. Although God and the devil are at war, we don't have to wait until the end to see who will win. God has already defeated Satan (Revelation 12:10-12), and when Christ returns, the devil and all he stands for will be eliminated forever (Revelation 20:10-15). Satan is here now, however, and he is trying to win us over to his evil cause. With the Holy Spirit's power, we can resist the devil, and he will flee from us:

> "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (James 4:7-10)

We come nearer to God and resist temptation by:

- 1) Submitting to God. We are to yield to His authority and will, commit our life to Him and His Holy Spirit control, and be willing to follow Him;
- 2) Resisting the devil. We are not to allow Satan to entice and tempt us;
- 3) We are to wash our hands. . . and purify our hearts; lead lives of purity. We are to be cleansed from sin, replacing our desire to sin with a desire to experience God's purity;
- 4) We are to grieve and mourn and wail in sincere sorrow for our sins. Never be fearful
- of expressing deep heartfelt sorrow for what you have done;
- 5) We are to humble ourselves before the Lord, and He will lift us up (1 Peter 5:6).

The ultimate judgment of Satan and his forces will be when they are cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity.

## Satan:

He is the source of all sin, he is a liar and murderer, he caused other angels to sin in heaven, he is the deceiver, he is known as satan, devil, serpent, dragon, beelzebub, god of this age, prince of this world, prince of the power of the air, lucifer, belial, the enemy, the tempter, the wicked one, angel of light, accuser of the brethren, antichrist, adversary, murderer, liar, sinner, abaddon, apollyon, roaring lion, wolf, thief, wicked one, fowler, king of a kingdom, angel of the bottomless pit, leviathan, son of perdition (see Ezekiel 28:1-19; Isaiah 14:4-23; Daniel 8:20-21; 10:10-13, 20-21; Exodus 28:15-21;

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Proverbs 16:18; 18:12; 1 Timothy 3:6; Luke 10:18; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 John 3:8; John 8:44; 2 Thess. 2:7; Genesis 3:1-6; James 3:15; Matthew 25:41; Jeremiah 4:23-26).

Evil Spirits:

Evil spirits are Satan's servants (see 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 6:12; 1:21; 3:10; Rom. 8:38; Titus 3:1; Col. 2:5, 10; Dan. 10:13, 20-21; Luke 22:53; Col. 1:13).

Fallen Angels:

(a partial listing of Scripture - Ps. 78:49; Rev. 12:7-9; Rom. 8:38; Rev. 12:4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 9:14-15; 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Cor. 6:3; Mth. 25:41).

Demon Spirits (there are 3 viewpoints):

- 1) They are angles who fell with Satan, some of which were bound while others are still loose (Ps. 78:49);
- 2) They are disembodied spirits of pre-Adamic race of beings;
- 3) They are spirits of the unnatural offspring of angels (Gen. 6:1-6), the Bible does not state their origin, it does reveal that they have real personalities and desire to express themselves through mankind; it appears that the difference between fallen angels and demons is that fallen angels do not seek to inhabit a human body; (Ps. 78:49; Gen. 6:1-6; Mark 5:1-20; Mth. 8:29; John 13:27; Mark 1:34; 16:17; Luke 9:1; 10:17; James 2:19; 1 Cor. 10:20-21; Mth. 9:33-34)

Their nature:

Totally depraved in all ways; their character can be determined by their names: devils; evil spirits; unclean spirits; dumb spirits; blind and dumb spirits; deaf and dumb spirits; foul spirits; lying spirits; spirit of infirmity; spirit of divination; seducing spirits; lunatic spirits; antichrist spirits; spirit of whoredom; spirit of the world; spirit of error; spirit of fear; perverse spirit; familiar spirit.

Their Work:

To deceive, oppose, pervert, hold captive, blind, sow tares, seduce, trouble, oppress, vex, bind, possess, torment, buffet, and resist people.

## **Christ's conquest of Hell:**

Ultimately, there are three major views of where Christ went during those three days following His death. We must understand that the death of Christ was the conquest of Satan's kingdom: (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-16; John 12:31, 32). Satan held the power of sin, sickness, disease and death, as well as control over his own kingdom of principalities, powers and wicked spirits of this world system. At Christ's death, He disarmed the princes and powers of Satan, stripping Satan of the keys of death and hell. He turned what seemed to be the greatest defeat into the greatest victory. He spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphed over all in the Cross. The death of Christ was the conquest of the whole of Satan's realm.

Three days and three nights:

Jesus expressly said that He would be in the heart of the earth for a period of three days and three nights, thus fulfilling the sign of the prophet Jonah when he was three days in the heart of the great fish (Mth. 12:39, 40; Jonah 3:3; Mark 8:31; John 2:18-21; Mth. 27:63; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Eph. 4:8-10). This period of three days relative to the death and burial of Christ was shadowed forth in Old Testament (Josh. 1:11; 2:16-22; Esther 4:16; Jonah 1:17; Numbers 10:33; Gen. 22:1-14; Ex. 3:18; 10:22; 15:26; Gen. 40:12-19).

These three days act as a bridge between Christ's crucifixion and His resurrection.

Three Views:

His descent to Hades: this view teaches that Christ descended to hell (Hades) or Sheol (Hebrew) and preached to the spirits in prison during



"IT WAS JUST BEFORE THE PASSOVER FEAST. JESUS KNEW THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR HIM TO LEAVE THIS WORLD AND GO TO THE FATHER. HAVING LOVED HIS OWN WHO WERE IN THE WORLD, HE NOW SHOWED THEM THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS LOVE." (JOHN 13:1)

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the three days that His body was in the tomb.

His ascent to Heaven: this view teaches that Christ ascended to His Father and was with the Father during the three days and nights of Calvary. He took the repentant thief with Him to Paradise, which is the third heaven. His ascent and descent: the third view is between the previous two views. It teaches that Christ did go to heaven, or Paradise, and was with the Father during the three days and nights of Calvary. It also holds that Christ, at either the beginning or close of the three day period, released the spirits of the Old Testament righteous who were being held in a division of Hades into Paradise.

The primacy of the third viewpoint:

Jesus promised the repentant thief that he would be with Him in Paradise that day (Luke 23:39-43).

At His death, Jesus committed His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46).

Before His death, Jesus clearly told the disciples that He was going "unto the Father" not Hades (John 13:1, 36; 14:1-6, 28; 16:5, 16-22; 17:11, 13). Jesus went to be with the Father.

Scriptures also say the Christ descended into the lower parts, or the lower down divisions of the earth and then led captivity captive (Eph. 4:8-10). Christ conquered Satan, sin, sickness, disease, the curse, demons and death (Judges 5:12; ob 42:10; Ps. 68:18; 126:1).

"We come nearer to God and resist temptation by submitting to God, yielding to His authority and will, commiting our life to Him and His Holy Spirit control, and following Him."

## How then should we live?

How should the doctrine of eternal judgment affect our lives as believers?

When writing on the subject of future judgment, the apostle Peter answered this question:

> "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him." (2 Peter 3:11-14)

Understanding of eternal judgment should result in a serious and sober mind-set toward God and His Kingdom as well as great joy, mercy, and peace. Understanding eternal judgment assists the believer in developing spiritual maturity.

The subject of Christian maturity, which Paul calls "going on to perfection", is the final subject of our study.

## **Summary**

- 1. All men, saved and lost, will be resurrected, and after their resurrection, they will face judgment.
- 2. Sin can be against other men, and sin can be against yourself. However, all sin is ultimately against God. God is the One who will judge man for his sin.
- 3. God is the moral Judge of the universe. He is a righteous Judge, and He will give to everyone his due with unvarying impartiality.
- 4. The principles of divine judgment are:
  - God will judge all men.
  - God's judgment is according to truth.

  - God will judge every man's deeds.God will judge the hidden motives of the heart.
  - God will judge without partiality.
  - God will judge men according to the "light" that He made available to them.
- 5. There are six great "eternal" judgments of God:
  - The judgment of sin at the cross.

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"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

Notes:	9. Satan is the originator of sin and the king over a host of fallen angels and spirits who carry out his work surrounding earth.  10. We come nearer to God and resist temptation by submitting to God, yielding to His authority and will, committing our life to Him and His Holy Spirit control, and following Him.  10. The work of Satan is to deceive, oppress, oppose, pervert, hold captive, blind, sow tares, seduce, trouble, vex, bind, possess, torment, buffet, and
	LIFE APPLICATION:  1. In what two ways is the word "judgment" used in the Old Testament?
	2. What is the meaning of the words "to judge"?
	3. Why is judgment necessary?
	4. Who will do the judging at the time of eternal judgment?
	5. Who will be judged?

- The judgment of believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ. - The judgment of Israel in the time of Jacob's Trouble.

6. The eternal sufferings of the lost consist in:
- Exclusion from the presence, favor and fellowship of God.
- The loss of all earthly good, enjoyment and pleasure.

- Unrestricted, personal fellowship with Jesus Christ.

- Those who overcome will reign with Jesus for eternity.
- We will inherit all things.

7. God will create new heavens and a new earth, untainted by sin or its effects.

8. Some of the characteristics of the life of the redeemed in the eternal state

- The judgment of the Gentile nations. - The Great White Throne judgment of the lost.

- The judgment of the fallen angels.

- Inward despair and agony.

- Extreme anguish and torment.
- The companions.

- The fire.

- It is eternal.

- No boring religion.

- No more sea.

- No darkness.

- Everything will be new.

- No more death, sorrow, crying or pain.

6. What principles will govern judgment at that time?	
7. Write the Key Verse from memory.	
9. How can a Christian overcome temptation?	"Though wickedness is all about us and life problems are overwhelming, we learn that evil is stronger than we are, but that God is stron- ger than evil."
10. If the statement is TRUE write the letter T in the blank in front of it. If the statement is FALSE, write the letter F. aThere is judgment going on at all times. bThere is a judgment reserved for a special time in the future. cThe Bible does not tell where future judgment will occur.	Notes:
<b>Prayer:</b> Lord Jesus, thank you conquering sin, death, and Satan at the Cross. I know there is no way I can fully grasp what You've done. I simply come to You with a thankful heart giving our Father praise and glory for His great love, mercy, and impartial judgement. I pray in Jesus' name, AMEN.	Notes.

## UNIT EIGHT: PERFECTION - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

"...for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:16)

We are to be like our heavenly Father - holy in everything we do. Holiness means being totally devoted or dedicated to God, set aside (sanctified) for His special use and set apart from sin and its influence.

We're to be set apart and different. Our focus and priorities must be His. We cannot become "perfect" or "mature" or "holy" on our own; God gives us His Holy Spirit to bring us to maturity.

## Introduction:

Just as a good foundation is important to a building in the natural world, a good spiritual foundation is important for the believer. Through the parable of the two builders you learned that your spiritual foundation must be built on the Word of God.

Hebrews 6:1-3 reveals that the foundations of the Christian faith are:

- -Repentance from dead works
- -Faith toward God
- -Doctrine of baptisms
- -Laying on of hands
- -Resurrection of the dead
- -Eternal judgment

These are basic doctrines of the Word of God on which you are to build your spiritual life.

Spiritual maturity does not mean advancing in God's favor. It does not mean the work of salvation is incomplete. It does not gain you access to Heaven, because this was done through the death of Jesus Christ at Calvary. It is through Jesus you are justified before God. It is through Him you are saved and have the promise of Heaven.

Perfection does not come by maintaining a set of standards. It is possible for a person to maintain standards that give an outward spiritual appearance yet be unspiritual and possibly, even unsaved.

Spiritual maturity does not depend on how you feel emotionally, what you think intellectually, or as a matter of will power. It does not come automatically through years of being a Christian or by Christian service. Spiritual maturity (perfection) comes through an increase in and application of spiritual knowledge over time. This increase in knowledge comes by study of God's Word, the application of God's Word, in time and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This study results in understanding of the processes for perfection and the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. Personal application of what you learn leads to spiritual maturity through the enabling power of God through His Holy Spirit.

## On To Perfection:

In Hebrews 6:1-3 Paul gives an additional step which is necessary in building your spiritual life:

"Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God," (Hebrews 6:1)



CHILDREN. IN REGARD TO EVIL BE INFANTS, BUT IN YOUR THINKING BE ADULTS." (1 CORINTHIANS 14:20)

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As we've seen, repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are all principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Two extremes are common among believers. One is that they have a knowledge of the Word of God but do not apply that knowledge to daily living. The other extreme is that believers emphasize experience and ignore doctrine. Both doctrine and experience are important. A proper understanding of doctrine results in experience. But experience that is not based on Biblical doctrine is not trustworthy.

You must not only understand the basic doctrines of Hebrews 6:1-3 but you must also experience them. Once you have built your life on these doctrines through experience, you must learn how to "go on unto perfection". That is the purpose of this portion of our study.

## **Definition:**

The word "perfection" means complete, finished, mature, whole. The Bible uses the word "perfection" rather than "maturity" to describe the final stage of Christian life. A "perfect" Christian is one who has achieved spiritual maturity. This means his body, soul, and spirit are all under the control of the Holy Spirit; it is a life surrendered entirely to God.

The word "perfection" is similar to the word "sanctification" or "consecration" which are also used in the Bible. "Sanctification" means holiness and "consecration" means to be set apart in righteousness.

## **Two Dangers:**

There are two dangers if spiritual foundations are emphasized without attention to perfection:

- l. One danger is to lay a good spiritual foundation and not go on to spiritual maturity.
- 2. The other danger is to attempt to build a "superstructure" of perfection on a faulty spiritual foundation.

## Completing the foundation:

A foundation is not a completed house. A building of some sort, a house in this case, must be built on the foundation. A superstructure is that part of a building which is visible above the foundation. A good spiritual foundation is not the final goal for a believer:

"For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:29,30)

Many people begin with God. They hear the gospel, repent from dead works, and have faith toward God, but they never progress beyond this point. They never complete their spiritual foundation and go on to perfection.

A partial foundation in the natural world is not functional. You cannot construct a building on a partial foundation or it will collapse under stress. You must complete the foundation and then construct the building.

Believers who have not completed their spiritual foundations will have difficulty under stress. They will live "up and down" lives spiritually. Their spiritual building will not weather the storms of life. They cannot go on to perfection (spiritual maturity) because their foundation is incomplete.

## **Building the superstructure:**

In the natural world, a foundation alone is not very functional. It is the building constructed on that foundation that serves as a home, office, or school. The reason some people are spiritually immature is because they only lay a spiritual foundation and never finish the building by going on to perfection.

"Believers must go beyond first principles on to spiritual maturity (perfection). Spiritually mature believers are able to feast on the "meat", not just the "milk", of the Word of God."

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"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; The old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) The writer of Hebrews spoke of these spiritually immature believers:

"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:12-14)

The writer told these believers that it was time that they should be teaching others the gospel. Instead, they were having to be taught the first (foundational) principles of God. He compared them to babies who could only drink milk. By "milk" he meant the first principles of God.

Milk is very healthy and brings growth, but there comes a time when a baby goes on to solid foods:

"Who is it he is trying to teach? To whom is he explaining his message? To children weaned from their milk, to those just taken from the breast?" (Isaiah 28:9)

Just as weaning from milk is necessary in the natural world if a child is to develop properly, it is also necessary in the spiritual world. Believers must go beyond the first principles on to spiritual maturity (perfection). Spiritually mature believers are able to feast on the "meat", not just the "milk", of the Word of God.

## The call to perfection:

Jesus calls His followers to perfection:

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

## This perfection reflects the presence of God:

"I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:23)

#### It results in spiritual maturity:

"Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults." (1 Corinthians 14:20)

## Perfection was a goal of the early church. Paul wrote:

"We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority--the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you." (2 Corinthians 9-11)

# Individual perfection results in your being perfectly joined together with other believers in the Body of Christ:

"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Corinthians 1:10)

## Divisions in the Body of Christ are a result of spiritual immaturity.

## The example of perfection:

Jesus is the example of perfection for believers:

"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." (1 Peter 2:21)

"In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through

whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." (Hebrews 2:10)

"and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Hebrews 5:9)

God planned believers to be conformed (be made like) Jesus who is our example of perfection:

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

## The standard of perfection:

The standard of perfection by which believers are measured is God's Word. Jesus was the example of perfection and conformed perfectly to the Word because He was the visible revelation of God's Word. God has set standards in His Word which are to govern our lives. The first standards He gave man were called the "Law" and are recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament.

"It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards."

Much of the history of the Old Testament records the inability of man to keep God's laws. God knew man would not be able to keep the Law through his own efforts. But God had some specific purposes for giving the Law. One of the purposes of the Law was to show men their sinful condition. Another purpose was to show them that they could not become righteous by their own efforts:

"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin." (Romans 3:20)

God did not leave us in this hopeless condition. Through the Law He promised the Messiah:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account." (Deuteronomy 18:18,19)

In Acts 3:22-26 these same words are quoted by the apostle Peter and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ:

"For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.' "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways." (Acts 3:22-26)

In the Old Testament, various sacrifices were required by God for sin. After Jesus sacrificed His life for the sin of all mankind, the Old Testament sacrifices were no longer necessary:

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship." (Hebrews 10:1)

"because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." (Hebrews 10:14)

The purpose of the law is summarized in these words:

"But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:22-24)

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"ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED AND IS USEFUL FOR TEACHING, REBUKING, CORRECTING AND TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, SO THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."

(2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17)

Man could not keep the standards of a righteous God through self-effort. The Law showed the need for a Savior and led man to Jesus Christ. It is through Christ, not self-effort, that you are perfected. It is through Him by the Holy Spirit that you are conformed to His example of perfection and to the standard of the Word of God:

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

As Christians, we have the ability to choose to do what is uncharacteristic of those saved by Christ; to walk "according to the flesh." The process of sanctification (growing in Christ-likeness) takes place when:

"...if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body..." (Rom. 8:13)

We are to actively work out what God is working in; growing in holiness and "putting to death" any sin in our hearts or minds, as well as in our words and deeds. However, we must always be mindful that though we are to actively put forth effort, it is only "by the Spirit" that we can succeed. The more we are fully led of the Holy Spirit, the more obedient we become.

## Levels of perfection:

There are two levels of perfection:

**Initial perfection:** 

In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul calls the believers "saints" which means "sanctified ones". Yet in the same letter he corrects these "saints" because of sin. They were believers and sanctified in Christ, but some of them were not living right in their daily conduct.

These believers had received initial perfection. They were forgiven of their sins through redemption from dead works. These sins were forgiven once and for all (Hebrews 10:14). This initial perfection was received at the time they accepted Jesus as Savior. But these Christians had not gone on to perfection. They had not continued to put off the "old man" of sin:

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:6)

Paul told them it was not right to continue living in sin after conversion. He said:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

As a believer you should live a new life. It is not right to continue in sin. Paul said:

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:1-4)

We must go on to perfection.

**Progressive perfection:** 

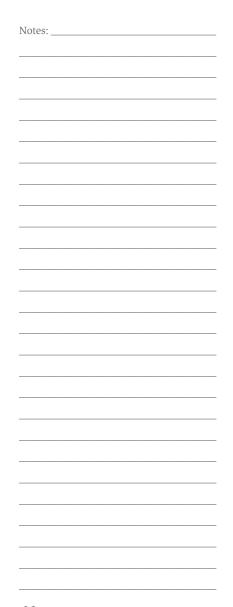
Initial perfection from sin at the time of salvation is the start of a progressive life of sanctification. After salvation, you are to live a new life in Christ:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Paul described progressive perfection in his own life:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." (Philippians 3:12)

Paul had not attained complete perfection, but it was his goal. He described his struggle for perfection in another passage:



"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." (Romans 7:15-23)

Paul wanted to live by God's standards, but he realized that by himself (in his flesh) he could not achieve this goal. There was a constant battle between his flesh and his spirit. His spirit wanted to keep God's laws (Romans 7:22). His flesh wanted to sin. He discovered that the only way he could achieve perfection was through Christ:

"But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:10-13)

It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards. When the "flesh" results in you doing those "things we would not", God has provided a way to restore you to perfection:

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit is God's promise or guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in Him. The Spirit is in us now by faith, and by faith we are certain to live with Christ forever (see also Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14):

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

You do not have to try to live this new life in your own strength. You live it through "faith in the Son of God" by the power of the Holy Spirit. Whenever you fail, you can be restored to perfection before God by confessing your sins and asking forgiveness.

As said, confession frees us to enjoy fellowship with Christ. It eases our consciences and lighten our cares. But some Christians do not understand how it works. They feel so guilty that they confess the same sins over and over; then they wonder if they might have forgotten something. Other Christians believe that God forgives them when they confess, but if they died with unconfessed sins, they would be forever lost. These Christians do not understand that God wants to forgive us. He allowed his beloved Son to die just so he could offer us pardon. When we come to Christ, he forgives all the sins we have committed or will ever commit. We don't need to confess the sins of the past all over again, and we don't need to fear that God will reject us if we don't keep our slate perfectly clean. Of course we should continue to confess our sins, but not because failure to do so will make us lose our salvation. Our relationship with Christ is secure. Instead, we should confess so that we can enjoy maximum fellowship and joy with him.

True confession also involves a commitment not to continue in sin. We wouldn't be genuinely confessing our sins to God if we planned to commit them again and just wanted temporary forgiveness. We should also pray for strength to defeat temptation the next time we face it.

If God has forgiven us for our sins because of Christ's death, why must we confess our sins? In admitting our sins and receiving Christ's cleansing, we are:

- 1. Agreeing with God that our sin truly is sin and that we are willing to turn from it;
- 2. Ensuring that we don't conceal our sins from Him and consequently from ourselves, and;
- 3. Recognizing our tendency to sin and relying on His power to overcome it.

When you are born again, you are just like a baby in the natural world. You have much to learn spiritually. While you are learning you make mistakes. When you make mistakes, you confess your sins.

As a believer, you fight your enemy, Satan. This is a spiritual battle which takes place in your mind and through the circumstances of life around you. On occasion, you may lose a battle to the enemy. But this does not mean he has won the war. You may temporarily

"God uses spiritual leaders in the perfection process. You should submit to the leadership of those God sets in authority in the church."

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"...AND OUR PRAYER IS FOR YOUR PERFECTION." (2 CORINTHIANS 13:9)

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go down in defeat but through confession of your sins you can rise again in righteousness to continue on to perfection.

As you learned in the previous lessons, Jesus has already judged Satan. Satan was defeated by Jesus at Calvary. The power of God within you is greater than the power of the enemy:

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

You go on to perfection through the strength of this power, not human effort. Going on to perfection is not a course in self-improvement. It is learning to live as the new creature you are through faith in Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## The perfection process:

The following things are necessary for the perfection process to occur in your life:

## A good foundation:

As you learned in this course, a good spiritual foundation is required to go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1-3):

"...not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment..." (Hebrews 61-3)

## Response to the Word of God:

One of the purposes of the Word of God is to provide correction which results in perfection:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

Just studying God's Word will not perfect you. You must make a personal response to the Word:

"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:21-25)

You must not only look into God's law, but "continue" (live) according to it. You must make a personal response to the Word by laying aside all "filthiness and naughtiness". Being a doer of the Word brings assurance of salvation:

"But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:" (1 John 2:5)

#### **Prayer:**

Prayer results in perfection:

"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." (Colossians 4:12)

## **Consecration:**

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1,2)

By consecrating your life to God you will know His perfect will. Consecration means to be set apart. When you consecrate your life to God you refuse to conform to the standards of the world. You choose to conform to the standards of God's Word.

## Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

One of the purposes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to assist the perfection process in your life. God has ministry gifts in the church:

"...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be

built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12,13)

## Submission to proven ministries/authorities:

God uses spiritual leaders in the perfection process. You should submit to the leadership of those God sets in authority in the church. Submission to "proven" ministries means submitting to spiritual leaders whose ministries have shown conformity to God's Word. The role of spiritual leaders in the perfection process is revealed in these passages:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mth. 28:19,20)

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (Eph. 4:11-15)

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." (2 Tim. 2:2)

"My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," (Gal. 4:19)

"Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith." (1 Thessalonians 3:10)

"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)

"...always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." (Colossians 4:12)

"We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection." (2 Corinthians 13:9)

**Suffering:** 

No one likes to suffer, but when suffering comes in the life of a believer it can have a positive purpose - suffering results in perfection:

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 5:10)

Patience during times of suffering results in perfection:

"Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:4)

## **Self-control:**

Part of the process of perfection is learning self-control. We are told that:

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)

One of the most difficult things to control is the tongue. But control of the tongue is a key to self-control of your whole life:

"We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check." (James 3:2)

Responding to spiritual correction:

Correction received from spiritually mature believers is also part of the perfection process: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

"No one likes to suffer, but when suffering comes in the life of a believer it can have a positive purpose."

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You will be restored to perfection if you respond properly to such correction.



"Dear friends, let us love one ANOTHER, FOR LOVE COMES FROM G G DO IS

**Summary** 

We have come to the conclusion of our brief study of the foundations of the Christian faith. But in reality you have not completed this course. As Paul said, you must now "go on to perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). Your new objective, for the next step of faith, is perfection.

"...and our prayer is for your perfection." (2 Corinthians 13:9)

OD. EVERYONE WHO LOVES HAS EEN BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS OD. WHOEVER DOES NOT LOVE DES NOT KNOW GOD, BECAUSE GOD LOVE." (1 JOHN 4:7, 8)	1. Define "perfection".		
	2. Who is the example of perfection for believers?		
otes:			
	3. Define initial perfection.		
	4. What is meant by progressive perfection?		
	5. List nine factors involved in the perfection process.		
	6. Write the Key Verse from memory.		

7. If the statement is TRUE write T on the blank in front of it. If the statement is FALSE, write F on the blank in front of it.  aSpiritual maturity depends on the length of time one has been a Christian.  bProgressive sanctification does not mean salvation was incomplete.  cMany Christian activities will help you mature spiritually.  dPerfection comes through an increase in spiritual knowledge and personal application of that knowledge.  8. What is the standard of perfection for believers?	"You must not only look into God's law, but "continue" (live) according to it."
Prayer: Father, all the earth is Yours and the glory therein. You have created all things for Your pleasure and I thank You that You are my heavenly Father. Today I ask for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Open the eyes of my understanding so that I may know what is the hope of Your calling, what are the riches of the glory of Your inheritance with all the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of Your power for me and all those who believe. I pray in Jesus' name, AMEN.	Notes:

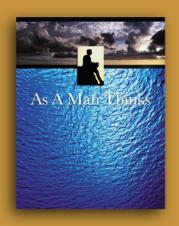
CORE Discipleship is a faith-based, Christian organization. Our mission is to help you make disciples of Jesus. We provide a simple and reproducible discipleship process based on Jesus' "inner circle" or "core" comprised of Peter;

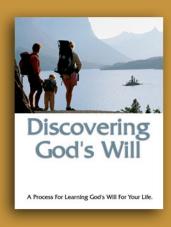
James, and John. We also provide discipleship training and discipleship resources available as free downloadable eBooks. CORE is a Biblical process that can help develop an unbelievable spiritual discipleship community where no one stands alone, struggles alone, develops alone or grows up alone.

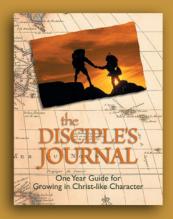
May God grant that we become His disciples by His grace,

Doug & Suzie Morrell CORE Discipleship

## Other Resources From Core Discipleship







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